

From Directors Desk,

It is pleasure to present the annual report of the activities of Institute during the year 2007-2008.

The focus of the research activities in the Institute continued on the prevention, care and support and characterization of Indian HIV strains. Phase II trial of Tenofovir Gel was completed during the year. Study on the efficacy of antiretroviral treatment in preventing transmission in discordant setting continued in the year. This study has presented challenges in attaining targeted enrollment and new approaches are being adopted in attempt to increase the enrollment. Phase I trial of Adeno Associated Virus based vaccine completed last year showed that the vaccine was safe; however immune response seen in the volunteers was not sufficient to take the vaccine further. A prime and boost vaccine trial with DNA and MVA vaccine is being planned and protocol development is in progress.

A clinical trial protocol ACTG 5175 with aim to compare response to a single daily dose PI/NNRTI regimen with standard twice daily regimen completed the enrollment during the year and the follow up continues. A new National AIDS Control Organization sponsored study to compare Nevirapine based regimen versus Efavirenz based regimen to treat tuberculosis patients with HIV infection was initiated during this year. The study involving "significant other" in meeting mental health needs of HIV infected persons is continuing.

HIV drug resistance testing is being done as a part of different treatment protocols. We also completed the enrollment in the HVDR Threshold surveillance at Mumbai site. The enrollment and follow up for the monitoring among patients in the ART rollout programme is ongoing.

A number of studies for characterization of Indian HIV viruses are being carried out. They include full length genome sequencing, neutralizing antibody studies, Multiple Hybridization Assay to identify recombinant viruses, studies on virus assembly etc.

The institute increased its area of activity through different programmes. Integrated Behavioural and Biological Assessment survey was implemented in six high prevalence states in collaboration with other ICMR Institutes. An interim report was released by Hon Minister of Health and Family Welfare at a function in Delhi on 5th December 2007. A multi-centric study for screening cervical abnormalities has been initiated at Pune, Chennai and Belgaum. The year also saw completion of a formative research study on HPV vaccine in the states of Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh with objective to develop advocacy strategy, design a communication strategy and to design effective vaccine delivery strategy for HPV vaccine demonstration project.

The Institute is working closely with the National AIDS Control programme on various aspects. The institute has a lead role in external quality assessment programmes for CD4 counts and HIV serology. As a regional Institute for HIV Sentinel Surveillance the Institute took responsibility for states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Goa besides playing lead role in developing survey manuals. NARI is lead Institute for HIV Drug Resistance surveillance programme. Training programmes are also being conducted for various health care providers involved in National programme.

One of the highlights of the year was organization of 34th Annual Conference of Indian Immunology Society and International HIV Immunology Symposium. Both were attended by about 400 senior and junior immunologists and students.

The institute still operates with a skeletal permanent staff. The SIU recommendation for additional 29 staff positions is submitted to the Council. Notwithstanding limited manpower, the Institute has made conscious efforts to expand the activities to national level through networking and collaborations. International collaborations have made a significant contribution to progress of the Institute. The scientists look forward to expanding the activities further for contributing towards the containment of epidemic.



Dr. Ramesh Paranjape
Director