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PRESS RELEASE

IIT Alumni Council advocates human- produced neutralizing antibodies as an immediate solution for saving lives in India while the world waits for appropriately scrutinized vaccines for Covid19.

- Council volunteers had concluded that a vaccine cannot be produced in time to control the death rate. Safety should not be compromised in emergency vaccine approvals.
- Numbers for mass vaccination in India make it an impossible, not just a difficult task. At Rs 1000 per person, vaccines could cost over Rs 100,000+ crores. Final cost of vaccination can be 2 or 3x of vaccine ex-factory price.
- Unless everyone is vaccinated, there is little to be achieved in vaccinating small pockets of people who may not be in any danger or may even be asymptomatic or non-infectious even if infected.
- Herd immunization is gradually beginning to happen and maybe our best option. Dharavi is an example. In the interim, lives have to be saved. NAB is the only solution.
- Focus should be on isolating high-risk individuals and treating only the small percentage of infected individuals reporting respiratory distress with neutralizing antibodies prior to autoimmune attack, to save lives.

New Delhi, Sept 18, 2020: IIT Alumni Council suggests pursuance of human produced neutralising antibodies (NAB) for Covid as a practical, safe and immediate option to save lives and restore economic normalcy as herd immunity finally starts taking effect.

"Vaccine without standard clinical trials is not free from risks to human lives . By the time a universally effective vaccine is ready to be manufactured consistently at scale and distributed universally, the pandemic would have wrecked massive damage – economic as well as to human lives. To save lives, an effective biologic human-produced neutralizing antibodies is required as an immediate solution for saving lives" said Ravi Sharma, President and Chief Volunteer of the IIT Alumni Council.

"Under the MegaTx initiative, the world's largest plasma collection, processing and hyperimmune injectable production capacity creation is already in process. A 360 degree solution comprising of universal longitudinal testing and antibody based treatment of critical patients can save 50% of the lives which will otherwise be lost. Vaccine will not cure critical patients" added spokesman for Project Platinae who has conceived of the end to end technology stack for MegaTx.

"The only sure and immediate cure that seems to exist is a hyper immune neutralising antibody extract harvested from a real human being. In time, infrastructure can be built to genetically clone these effective antibodies in a high expression mammalian cell line. Convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) is only an interim step towards administering antibodies for three reasons – the donor may have other infections, the donor may not have NABs even though he has antibodies and the donor may not have NAB in adequate quantities. We have to produce hyperimmune immunoglobins – and that may be our fastest life saver" said Dr Samir Kulkarni, Chairperson of the Research Centre for Engineered Biomolecules, a MegaIncubator initiative.

About IIT Alumni Council

IIT Alumni Council is the largest global body of alumni, students and academicians across all the twenty-three IITs and partnering Institutes of the India Innovation Network (I2Net). The IIT Alumni Council aspires to catalyse India's technological renaissance. For this it catalyses the creation of rapid response short term initiatives like the C19 Task Force and perpetual strategically planned initiatives like MegaFund, MegaIncubator and I2Net. Through such initiatives, IIT Alumni Council intends to act as a network and as a bridge between various providers of knowledge, wealth, information, wisdom, ideas, expertise and entrepreneurship to promote appropriate technological solutions to known social challenges at the national level. As a demonstration, the six month C19 Task Force set up in March 2020 conceived of large start-up initiatives like the NSCI Dome, Covid Test Bus, MegaLab and MegaTx – by aggregating over 10 million hours of 20,000+ volunteers, all of it on a pro bono basis. The Council is continuing to rally the considerable resources – both financial and technological - of the global IIT alumni ecosystem to catalyse global scale interventions in the social sector. For more information on IIT Alumni Council, please visit: www.iitalumnicouncil.org

A distinguished Alumnus of IIT Roorkee, former Corporate leader and now full time Philanthropist - Ravi Sharma plays an active role in global revitalisation and unification of IIT alumni across countries, across IITs and across age groups. He is the President and Chief Volunteer of the IIT Alumni Council and also leads the Institute Outreach & Branding initiatives. The main deliverables of the Council are facilitating alumni networking, fortifying Brand IIT and Brand India, catalysing alumni participation in nation building and accelerating technological developments in key areas of our economy including start-ups, manufacturing and digital transformation. The Council has six operating missions - Alumni Networking , Research Mentorship, Social Venture funding, CSR Platform, a policy Thinktank and a Mega Incubator. The IIT Alumni Council is now actively engaged in solving the corona crisis and had formed the C19 Task Force with participation of over 20,000 alumni. The India Innovation Network includes Mumbai University and ICT Mumbai as institutional partners. C19 Task Force initiatives being taken forward include the 12.5 million tests per month MegaLab and the 50K litres harvested blood per month MegaTx.

An alumnus of Institute of Chemical Technology, University of Mumbai and Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, Samir Kulkarni holds versatile qualification in complementing faculties of pharmaceutical sciences, bioprocessing, chemical engineering and business management. His total experience extends over a period of about 20 years in the area of biological sciences, with tenures in reputed research institutions such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory and University of Cincinnati, as well as in leading biologics organizations such as, Intas Pharmaceuticals, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, USV Limited etc. In senior leadership roles in biologics development organizations, he has successfully executed strategic and technical planning to enable launch of Biosimilars in Indian and Global Markets. He is presently working as the Director for Innovation, Incubation and Linkages with University of Mumbai and also holds additional charge as the Director of National Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. As a representative of the University of Mumbai he has been actively volunteering in the coordination of different initiatives of the IIT Alumni Council and providing technical insights in biomolecule development and diagnosis to manage the Covid19 Pandemic. Dr Kulkarni has played a key role in the evaluation of various incubatee proposals and has mentored several teams that are closely and directly involved with the various C19 Task Force initiatives.