

PRESS RELEASE

IIT Alumni Council announces withdrawal from vaccine development race with immediate effect.

- Required research inputs relating to C19 including pathogen / host gene sequencing and clinical trials still under development.
- It may thus not be possible to be able to deliver an effective vaccine. Success is then dependent on luck (or chance) rather than on science (which is predictable and replicable).
- “Cart before horse” approach based on commercializing vaccine before adequate research and clinical trials has unknown long-term safety implications.
- Mass deployment of vaccines to 100 crore+ Indians may not be the best use of our resources.

New Delhi, Aug 24, 2020: IIT Alumni Council announces formal disbanding of the Vaccine Initiative that was part of the six-month C19 Task Force. The vaccine team concluded that none of the available approaches and claims were adequately backed by disclosed scientific data, patient research and clinical studies. In addition to getting the vaccine paradigm right, factors like adjuvants could play a critical role. Folded

protein simulation, antibody genome library creation, antibody characterisation etc are all necessary precedents to vaccine production.

Some of the vaccine approaches being attempted globally involve injecting a deactivated virus or simulated protein fragment into the body so as to induce the body to generate antibodies. The adverse reaction of the vaccine injection as well as the efficacy and lifespan of the antibodies is unknown. All of this is currently work in progress under initiatives like MegaTx. Even though India has more patient data than probably any other country in the world, it is not sufficient to deliver a vaccine as yet.

"IIT Alumni Council team concluded that developing a vaccine based on conventional research and clinical trials takes several years. Even then there is no certainty. For example even after 28+ years and over USD 100 Billion of funding, a HIV Aids vaccine is yet to succeed. Commercialising a vaccine within a few weeks or months should not be done considering safety aspects. The first logical step to developing a universal vaccine is accelerating research using simulation in preference to actual patient trials. It may not be advisable to subsidise or mass deploy a vaccine whose safety and long term efficacy is unproven" said Ravi Sharma, President of the IIT Alumni Council.

"Getting a vaccine right is like getting a hole in one in golf – possible but really hard to predict or achieve. Especially if you are playing blindfolded – which is the case when anyone tries to develop a vaccine without having adequate research data." Said Ashok Singh, an IIT Alumni leader who has been closely associated as a key volunteer of the C19 Task Force.

"Somewhere we have to consider the mathematics of an ambition statement. No more than 2% of Covid patients need critical care. There is a fair surety that most of these can be cured by antibody based biologics. On the other hand, for vaccination, we would probably need to vaccinate 98% of our population. Chasing 2% of the population with a

98% sure cure has a far better probability of success than chasing 98% of the population with a 2% surety of safety and efficacy” said Daljit Singh, an IIT Alumnus and former President of Fortis Healthcare..

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. Through its 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 technological solutions to social challenges. The Council has rallied the considerable resources of the global IIT alumni ecosystem to catalyse technological and financial interventions for the social sector.

The six month C19 Task Force was set up by the Global Board of the IIT Alumni Council to supplement and compliment the efforts of the central and state governments in the fight against C19. Its term ended on August 15th, 2020. Initiatives catalysed by the Task Force successfully include the NSCI Dome, Covid Test Bus, MegaLab, MegaTx and MegaIncubator – all of which are now being taken forward as independent social ventures. For more information on IIT Alumni Council, please visit: www.iitalumni council.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 (PanIIT Alumni), Mentorship (PanIIT Institute), Social Venture funding (PanIIT Fund), CSR Platform (PanIIT Foundation), a Thinktank (PanIIT Forum) a Biomolecule Mega Incubator (PanIIT Incubator). The IIT Alumni Council is now actively engaged in solving the corona crisis and has formed the C19 Task Force which has the participation of over 20,000 alumni and includes Mumbai University and ICT Mumbai as institutional partners. C19 Task Force initiatives include the 10 million tests per month MegaLab, the 50K litres harvested blood per month MegaTx and Rs 21,000 crore MegaFund.



Daljit Singh is a Strategy Advisor, Management Consultant, Life and Chairman-Malar Hospitals. During his tenure of 17 years with Fortis Healthcare, he has held the office of President, Chief Executive Officer and has led the Company's Strategy, Organizational Development and Projects Functions. Prior to joining Fortis, he was on the Board of Directors of ICI India. Daljit is an acknowledged expert and thought leader in the domain of Healthcare. He has represented Fortis at Industry forums like the World Economic Forum, Nathealth, CII and FICCI and led several healthcare related committees. He has held the office of President of Nathealth (Healthcare Federation of India) and has been an active participant on the World Economic Forum platform. He was on the Forum's Advisory Board on "The Economic Burden of Non-Communicable Diseases in India" and on the Global Agenda Council on Ageing. He is a mentor to a number of start-ups in Healthcare and has been a speaker at Indian and International forums on themes related to Leadership, Strategy and Healthcare. He is a trustee on the Boards of Ananda Sangha, Paramhansa Yogananda Charitable Trust and the Sai Aasra Charitable Trust,

A graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, Daljit was a Commonwealth Scholar to the Senior Management Programme at the Manchester Business School. With an outstanding track record in the field of athletics, his current interests include athletics, high altitude trekking, adventure sports, spirituality, music and reading.



Ashok Singh is a Chemical Engineer from IIT Kharagpur 1967 batch. After graduation he worked in Industry for 23 years till 1991. I was mainly in ICI (UK based company) in Explosives, Fertilizers and the Agro & Pharma industries at different locations. I was in Operations, Technology, Projects and General Management. Thereafter I have started up companies in Management Consulting, E-learning for Schools and Open Source E-learning platform development and Moodle Partners.

He was a trustee of the Vinod Gupta Charitable Trust for several years during which the Vinod Gupta School of Management was setup at Kharagpur and a girls polytechnic was started in a backward area in UP.

He was an executive member of PanIIT India for 4 years as a nominee of IIT, Kharagpur. He has served as President of IIT, Kharagpur Alumni Association. During this period he worked towards promotion of golf amongst IITians and organized six IIT golf tournaments in Delhi and the NCR area. The IIT Global Golf Tour is scheduled for 2021 and (Covid permitting) will be held in ten countries including USA, India, China, Singapore, Japan, UK, Canada and Indonesia.