

To: All Indian media houses

Date: 24 Apr 2022

**Subject: A call to distinguish between RT-PCR positives and clinical cases of Covid-19**

We, the undersigned doctors and medical professionals, call the attention of all media houses to the following issue in the context of Covid-19 news reporting.

- Firstly the virus has gone through the Indian population enough and is now well established as an endemic infection which shall keep causing flu like illness in only few people as most will not even develop severe symptoms.
- The ICMR had already called for the suspension of testing anyone not having any symptoms (Jan 2022).
- Children have been shown to tackle the virus much easier than adults. Children also do not pass Covid infection to others that easily as adults do to children. Schools have opened and no single outbreak or incidences of severe disease have been documented.
- Therefore healthy children must not be tested for Covid anymore unless the treating doctor in hospitalised cases requires it.
- Calling people (children or adults) with RT-PCR positive report as “cases” is faulty. A “case” is a person who has disease and presents with clinical symptoms and on subsequent testing is diagnosed as a clinical case of Covid. Please do not call all RT-PCR positives as “cases”. In fact, the term Covid-19 is defined as illness/disease, and it cannot be applied to someone who has no symptoms/illness, merely on the basis of some test.
- The public should be given complete and relevant information. How many tested positive for RT-PCR is not relevant. Report instead on hospitalization, and include information on comorbidities and age. Reporting should also give equal weightage to other major killer diseases such as tuberculosis, cancer, etc.
- Giving an incomplete picture amounts to misinformation and fear mongering. If the true and complete picture is presented, the public will not get into fear or panic, and we will be able to take rational decisions.
- It is responsible media reporting that can keep the public rightly informed rather than misinformed or ill-informed.

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