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National Launch of AG Chitra Tuberculosis Diagnostic Kit

The Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) in Trivandrum has recently developed a new test kit that can diagnose pulmonary tuberculosis at an early stage. This innovative technology has been licensed to M/S Agappe Diagnostics, Kochi. The AG Chitra TB diagnostic kit has now received approval from the Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) for manufacturing and marketing.

On 8th April 2024, the kit will be nationally launched virtually by Dr. V.K. Saraswat, President of SCTIMST and member NITIAayog. Dr Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, Dr Sanjay Behari, Director SCTIMST, Dr Harikrishna Varma, Head, BMT wing and Mr. Thomas John, Managing Director, Agappe Diagnostics will be facilitating the function.

Tuberculosis (TB) is a communicable disease that causes the highest number of deaths globally. Approximately 1.8 billion people in the world are affected by TB. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation, resulting in a 3.6% increase in the incidence of the disease since 2020. In India, the incidence of TB is 193 cases per 100,000 people in 2022, and in Kerala, it is 67 cases per 100,000 people. The World Health Organization (WHO) aims for India to have less than 50 cases per 100000 as an immediate

target. The major challenge in the TB eradication program is the lack of a highly accurate and affordable population-level screening tool to identify missing cases.

The newly developed AG Chitra TB diagnostic kit has an accuracy of 97.71%. The technology has been developed as an open platform, avoiding the need for proprietary machines to amplify DNA. The PCR testing centres established during the COVID-19 pandemic can now be repurposed for TB diagnosis using this kit. The sample-to-result time is around one hour. This low-cost, indigenously developed kit could revolutionize early detection of tuberculosis.This technology was developed by Dr Anoop Thekkuveettil and his team at the Division of Molecular Medicine, SCTIMST.