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D.O. No. Secy-DHR &DG,ICMR.Misc./2021
13th September, 2021

Subject: Nomination for Sun Pharma Science Foundation Research Awards under the Clinical Research category.

Dear Dr. **Jalali**

I am pleased to nominate Dr Manoj Vasant Murhekar, Director ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE), Chennai, for the Sun Pharma Science Foundation Research Awards under the Clinical Research category.

Dr Murhekar has led a number of seroepidemiological studies to generate reliable estimate of disease burden in the country and support policy decisions. He was the lead investigator for the four nationwide serosurveys for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research at different timepoints of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of these serosurveys provided insights about the extent of spread of infection in the community, and future trajectory of COVID-19 in India.

Another seroepidemiological study conducted in 60 districts covering individuals aged 5-45 years provided data about endemicity of dengue virus infection in India, which was required for policy decision for introduction of a dengue vaccine. Analysis of the residual samples from this study provided age-specific prevalence of Chikungunya, hepatitis-B virus, secondary dengue infection and immunity against diphtheria.

Dr Murhekar is the Principal Investigator of the MoHFW/UNDP funded project on surveillance for Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS). The catalytical models constructed on the age specific seroprevalence data of IgG antibodies against rubella among pregnant women estimated the incidence and burden of CRS in India. He was also one of the lead investigators from ICMR for seroepidemiological studies conducted to document the impact of measles and rubella (MR) vaccination campaigns conducted in India.

In another seroepidemiological study conducted among household and community contacts of Nipah cases during the 2018 outbreak in Kozhikode, Kerala indicated very low frequency of subclinical infections.

PTO.

Surveillance studies conducted among patients with acute febrile illness attending peripheral health facilities in Gorakhpur indicated scrub typhus as the commonest etiology of AFI during monsoon/post-monsoon months. The data generated by the epidemiological studies in the region were the basis of developing guidelines of early administration of doxycycline/azithromycin in children with AFI, in order to prevent their progression to acute encephalitis syndrome. AES.

I strongly recommend Dr Murhekar for the prestigious Sun Pharma Science Foundation Research Awards.

With regards

Yours sincerely

Balram Bhargava

(**Balram Bhargava**)

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