

Ref:TFR:NCB:JS-42:23-24

28th August 2023

To Whomsoever It May Concern

I have been approached by **Mr Abhishek Sharma** to support and justify his nomination for the Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Awards under the Category of Pharmaceutical Sciences. As Dean of Academics for the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, India, a centre of the Tata Institute for Fundamental Research (TIFR), it is my pleasure to do so, and add my strongest support him.

Mr Sharma is an Integrated PhD student [Research Scholar] in the laboratory of Prof. R. Sowdhamini w.e.f. 1st August 2017 at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), GKVK, Bellary Road, Bangalore - 560 065. We select Integrated PhD students, just after their Bachelor's degree, after three rounds of rigorous selection. Typically, we only select one out of every 1000 applicants, making these students amongst the very best in India.

The research work provided by the applicant, Mr Sharma is carried out in the lab of Prof. R. Sowdhamini's jointly with Prof Sudhir Krishna. Mr Sharma has analysed the evolutionary drifts of dengue virus, through multiple years. He had chosen one of the non-structural proteins for this detailed study to show that simultaneous mutations confer a stability advantage to the protein, whereas single mutations are observed to be less stable through computational studies. This work has been published in Molecular Biology and Evolution where he is the first author.

I am entirely convinced and wholeheartedly support Mr. Sharma's application. I strongly recommend that the Selection Committee of the Sun Pharma Science Foundation Science Scholar Awards give his application the highest consideration

The undersigned may be contacted for any information on the above that you may require.

**Rajesh K. Ladher**

Dean Academics

Dean of Academics

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