

Super-rapid diagnosis of dengue now possible

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Bhat Biotech joins small group of rapid diagnostic for dengue providers



New Delhi: Dr Shama Bhat, CMD, Bhat Biotech, a Bangalore based diagnostic company, has said that rapid diagnostic tests can help in substantially curbing the menace of dengue fever. Worldwide, there are very few companies that produce and market rapid diagnostic tests for dengue.

Bhat Biotech recently became the second Indian company to produce a test kit that detects the NS1 antigen along with IgM and IgG antibody. Goa-based Tulip diagnostics is already marketing their brand of a diagnostic kit for dengue. According to Dr Bhat, apart from the two Indian companies, there is just one other Korean company supplying rapid diagnostic tests for dengue in the Indian market.

Earlier, only serological tests that analyzed the WBC and the platelet count of the patient were used to diagnose dengue. Dr Bhat, said that, "Rapid diagnostic tests are said to be more specific as well as accurate than serological tests, in addition to providing the results instantaneously. Since the causative organism is a virus, its accurate detection remains a challenge."

Bhat Biotech's diagnostic test kit has been developed completely indigenously with more than five scientists having worked on the project, that can detect all known four sero types of dengue virus. It can be performed with whole blood, serum and plasma too. The test kit consists of a pack size of 10 tests with an expiry date of 18 months, thus allowing for its use in smaller labs with fewer samples as well. It is fast as it is based on the lateral flow Immunochromatography technology. The test can detect an infection within three days of infection. It is priced at Rs.160 per test.

In recent weeks, dengue fever has gripped the subcontinent, with some reports suggesting over 910 cases of dengue have been reported in New Delhi and 5,376 cases in Tamil Nadu. This is the highest number of reported dengue until

date. In a recent report by Terrapin, dengue fever was found to be among the five most infectious diseases in a number of countries in the APAC region, including India, Singapore, Philippines and Malaysia. In fact it was listed as the most prevalent infectious disease in India.