

COVID CRISIS IN INDIA: Pratham Insights and Field Response

Answers to Questions Posed at the May 14 Webinar

General Situation in India

Q: Are people in India fully vaccinated with the Covishield vaccine immune to the new variant from the UK circulating in India?

A: *Response by Dr. Mangala Narasimhan:* No one has done real testing on all of these variants. The South African and the UK strain fall under this vaccine. The others we don't know.

Q: What is the total need for oxygen in India and how much of it is being fulfilled by concentrators?

A: Please refer to this [article](#) on the oxygen shortage in India and some of the reasons.

Q: What are other needs in addition to oxygen concentrators for patients and health care workers?

A: Please see this [NY Times article](#) on the dangers facing health care workers, and this [BBC video](#) on hospitals especially in rural areas lacking even basic supplies. To stop the spread of Covid in villages, it is important that these rural areas are equipped with basic medical kits that include thermometers, oximeters, sanitizers, and masks. Pratham is aiming to provide these in the 20,000 communities it works in.

Q: Is the Indian army helping overcome some of the logistical challenges?

A: Yes. This [article](#) mentions oxygen, personnel and army medical infrastructure being deployed in Covid relief efforts.

Q: Why can't concentrators be made in India?

A: This [article](#) explains why the availability of cheaper concentrators from China has discouraged India's production, leaving only three Indian manufacturers.

Pratham's Distribution Plan

Q: What is the process for identifying the specific hospitals where OCs are deployed?

A: Pratham has been working with reliable healthcare NGO partners in India and with their help it is identifying healthcare facilities where OCs should be deployed. As part of this process and for the benefit of most marginalized populations the OCs are being deployed where: covid treatment is free of charge, there is adequate presence of healthcare staff and there is a need in the area in terms of positivity rate and case fatality ratio.

Q: How is Pratham ensuring that the equipment is used in a non-commercial setting and not misused or sold off in the black market?

A: Pratham is working with three well-known NGOs with deep roots in their respective communities who in turn are vetting hospitals and clinics in need of OCs. We are following certain tenets including not supplying OCs to any facility that will charge patients for their use. We are also putting in place a tracking system to see where our OCs are deployed and if/when they are moved.

Q: Does Pratham have any immediate or long term plans to help the most vulnerable outside of healthcare during lockdown, for example with food and other basic necessities?

A: While there is understandable concern about the pandemic's effect on people's economic well being Pratham's core mission is education and we believe we have a critical role on play in delivering accurate, essential and verified information related to COVID-19 to the 20,000 communities we serve, many of which are rural and low-tech and under-resourced. We have the unique ability to parse data for delivery via SMS and WhatsApp, and to do so in different regional languages.

Q: Is Pratham collaborating with international NGO's and UN agencies for covid relief?

Pratham has collaborated with international NGOs like Noora Health, Public Health Foundation of India. In addition, it is also utilizing the resources and content from WHO, UNICEF and translating them into regional languages to disseminate through its digital channels as part of "Karoni Apni Suraksha" campaign.

Q: What are Pratham's plans around vaccine administration?

A: Pratham will offer the physical infrastructure of its vocational centers to healthcare partners to be used for vaccination camps. In addition, as part of its YouthNet program, youth volunteers will be trained on motivating and registering community members for vaccination. The Pratham Shah Center for Digital Innovation (PSCDI) is also creating, curating, and translating videos on topics like myths around vaccines, how to register on CoWin App and side effects of vaccines. The Digital

Center has recently collaborated with the Govt. of Punjab in a statewide program to train youth as Health champions and support the Health and Rural development departments in awareness about symptoms and testing, supporting those who test positive and coordinating with local health workers to monitor their condition.

Q: What are Pratham's plans in the state of West Bengal and especially around Kolkata? Please share more about our implementation partner Liver Foundation in WB.

A: Liver Foundation is a well-known NGO working in the state of West Bengal. The organization has set up mobile clinics that are helping people in rural parts of West Bengal.

Q: How is Pratham ensuring the maintenance and upkeep of OCs?

A: Pratham is utilizing the services of existing medical equipment repair networks to ensure the upkeep of OCs. Looking at the need for this service on an ongoing basis, Pratham is also introducing a new vertical as part of its vocational training program on OC repair and maintenance.

Q: Are our vaccine advocacy efforts focused on the US government, Indian government, or both?

A: US Government