

PVRI India Task Force Report 2020

Almost every activity of the world came to a standstill, including some aspects of scientific research.

Report by Qadar Pasha & Prashant Bobhate

This year has been a turbulent one with Covid-19 hitting the world hard, significantly affecting output for this Task Force. Two planned face-to-face meetings in India and Kyrgyzstan had to be cancelled, prompting the organisers to discuss the value of a coordinated approach with one combined high altitude meeting each year.

Jungfrauoch Hut

- Early this summer Max Gassmann visited the highest research facility in Switzerland located at an altitude of 3500m. Research planning there involved a project to keep human volunteers and animal models at that altitude for weeks to analyse the impact of high altitude on a variety of gene expressions.

Project on gene drug development 2020 and acute exposure to altitude

- Dr Qadar Pasha's genetic study was awarded support for the next two years by The Cardiovascular Medical Research and Education Foundation, in Philadelphia. His institute CSIR-IGIB, which has received PVRI support, decided to divert research time to the Coronavirus.

Coronavirus effect in Ladakh, the Himalayan highland

- Reports from other similar highland regions of South America had suggested that the native people are resistant to Covid-19. The virus appears to be resistant to any extreme environment and all our observations suggest that the clinical effects of Covid-19 are the same at high altitude as sea level.

Research activities in this period

- Naturally every academic and researcher focused their attention on to Coronavirus, stalling ongoing research. Official websites including the WHO have done a commendable job sharing information and protecting lives. Dr Qadar Pasha devoted three months of his time assembling knowledge on the Coronavirus and subsequently produced a couple of manuscripts, one of which was published.
- This year, a visit was made to Leh in February and the venue and programme was finalised for the **6th International Leh Symposium** which has had to be postponed.



We are now looking to hold the event in either August or September 2021 at the Mahabodhi Global Family Resort near Leh.

We had a very successful webinar **Living with pulmonary hypertension** on 9 May 2020 in association with Pulmonary Hypertension India which is a patient support group.

The programme was coordinated by Dr Prashant Bobhate with Dr BKS Sastry, Dr Abraham Babu, Dr Vikas Kohli, Dr T Sunder and Dr Shine Kumar. It was widely attended by over 1700 delegates from India as well as other South East Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Publications

Two reviews from us in 2020:

- **Sex-derived attributes to SARS-CoV-2 fatality in co-morbid patients** Neha Chanana, Tsering

Palmo, Kavita Sharma†, Rahul Kumar, Brian Graham, Qadar Pasha. AM J Physiol Endo&Met 2020

- **Vascular homoeostasis at high altitude: role of genetic variants and transcription factors** Neha Chanana, Tsering Palmo, John H Newman and M.A Qadar Pasha. Pul Circa 2020

