



## COVID-19 Outbreak Control and Prevention State Cell

Health & Family Welfare Department

Government of Kerala

### Intensified Case Finding for TB among Post COVID patients

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Many studies across the world have reported the possibility of re/activation of TB infection leading to TB disease among COVID-19 recovered patients. Temporary immunosuppressive effects and lung inflammation caused by COVID-19 along with steroid induced immunosuppression might be leading to re/activation of dormant bacilli to TB disease. At least 10 cases of re/activation of TB disease have been reported recently from state of Kerala among post COVID patients within four weeks of recovery from COVID. Delay in diagnosis of TB have been reported since symptoms of post COVID respiratory diseases mimics symptoms of TB. In this context, following advisory is issued regarding intensified case finding for TB among COVID recovered patients.

1. Persistence of respiratory symptoms among COVID-19 recovered patients shall be evaluated for TB.
2. All post COVID clinics to incorporate TB screening routinely. All patients attending post COVID clinics to be asked for symptoms suggestive of TB (Fever for more than 2 weeks, Cough for more than 2 weeks, night sweats, significant weight loss, chest pain, symptoms of extra pulmonary TB including enlargement of any lymph node). If any of the above symptoms are present, appropriate specimens for the person need to be tested for Tuberculosis. If a Chest X ray is available, anybody with an abnormality in Chest Xray shall be offered TB testing using upfront NAAT.
3. While following up post COVID patients at field by the primary health care team, all patients to be asked for symptoms suggestive of TB. If any of the symptoms are present, they shall be offered testing for TB.
4. Patients recovered from COVID with persistence respiratory symptoms approaching tele-consultations shall be guided for ruling out TB.
5. NTEP machinery shall parallelly telephonically follow up all patients who required hospitalisation for COVID-19 and ensure that they are screened for TB.

Principal Secretary