



Omisure Kit

Why in News

Recently, the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has approved a **made-in-India testing kit, named Omisure**, for detecting the [Omicron variant](#) of the **SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus**.

- The kit currently in use to detect Omicron in the country has been developed by the US-based scientific instrumentation company Thermo Fisher.
- Further, the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) has proposed some measures to strengthen laboratory capacities, with the focus on addressing inequalities in access to Covid-19 diagnostics tools.

Key Points

▪ About Omisure:

- This [RT-PCR kit](#) is **manufactured by Tata Medical and Diagnostics**.
 - It uses **S-Gene Target Failure (SGTF) strategy**.
- Currently, Omicron patients are detected only after genome sequencing.
 - However, the Omisure test kit helps to eliminate this step and detects the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV2 in the nasopharyngeal/ oropharyngeal specimens during the RT-PCR tests.
- The Omicron variant underwent several mutations in the S-gene, the SGTF strategy checks and indicates it in patients who are detected Covid positive.
- **'S' Gene, ORF, 'N' gene, RdRp, 'E' gene** are viral genes that are targeted to detect Covid-19 virus.

▪ WHO Propositions:

- **Genomics Consortium:** The WHO is proposing to set up a SARS-CoV-2 genomics consortium in **Southeast Asia**.
 - The consortium will help enhance genomic sequencing and surveillance to develop a robust regional system for detecting and monitoring the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 viral threats for epidemics and pandemics.
- **Genome Sequencing:** WHO had called for increased [genome sequencing](#).
 - This will also help improve the timely use of genomic data for public health decision-making and to strengthen preparedness and response to future outbreaks/ pandemics.
- **Addressing Key Barriers:** Need to check key barriers like **limited trained workforce and other resources** for sustained long-term testing and sequencing capacities.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

- ICMR is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical

research.

- It was founded in 1911 with the name of **Indian Research Fund Association (IRFA)** and renamed as ICMR in 1949.
- It is funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Source: TH

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