

Dear Friends,

We wanted to communicate with you about the COVID-19 crisis in India, given our longstanding partnership with the School of International Biodesign in Delhi and our deep concern for our friends, colleagues, and alumni in India.

As you know, India is in the midst of the greatest humanitarian and healthcare emergency since the beginning of the pandemic. In this second wave, millions of people have been infected and thousands are dying every day. These numbers reflect estimates based on reported data – the real toll is likely an order of magnitude greater. The country's healthcare system is near collapse, with patients dying because of a lack of oxygen, essential medicines and medical technologies, and ICU beds.

The situation is about to get worse: with less than 5% of the population fully vaccinated, the highly virulent variants dominating this current wave may spread to smaller towns and rural areas with minimal healthcare infrastructure. The scale of the crisis could dwarf anything we are witnessing today.

From a global perspective, if the tsunami of coronavirus cases overwhelming India is not reduced quickly through vaccinations and other measures, the impacts will be swift and far-reaching. India is one of the world's leading producers of Covid-19 vaccine, especially for developing countries. It is a major player in the global vaccine-sharing initiative COVAX, and critical in the vaccination efforts for countries across South America and Africa. The current outbreak means that India cannot export vaccines to nations in desperate need, which could have a domino effect on human suffering around the world.

Further, the more the virus is able to spread unchecked, the more chances it has to replicate and mutate, increasing the chances that variants will arise that could eventually resist current vaccines. The emergence of such a strain threatens all nations, including those that are well-funded and well-vaccinated. The math is simple and potentially terrifying.

"If we don't help in India, I worry about an explosion of cases around the world," said Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health.

There are several ways we can help by lending our support to credible relief organizations including:

- **Give India** - one of the largest donation platforms in India and is raising a massive COVID relief fund. There are different areas of focus to which donations can be directed. <https://covid.giveindia.org/>
- **Act Grants** - an organization created by the Indian start-up ecosystem to create societal change. This fundraising effort is focused on oxygen supply. <https://actgrants.in/donate/>
- **India COVID SOS** - a grassroots volunteer group led by Stanford Professor Manu Prakash and supported by several Biodesign faculty members. Workstreams focus on **engineering** (O2 concentrators, pulse-ox supply, etc.), **diagnostics** (rapid antigen tests, pooled testing, etc.), and **vaccines**. <https://www.indiacovidsos.org/>

Thank you for your help. The pandemic won't be over for anyone until it is over for everyone.

Very truly yours,

The Stanford Byers Center for Biodesign Team