

DELTA, THE MOST DOMINANT VARIANT OF COVID-19 FOUND IN OVER 99% SAMPLES IN DELHI IN OCTOBER

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More than 7,300 samples have been sequenced from Delhi since Indian Sars-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) was set up early this year.

As reported earlier, the Delta variant of Covid-19 out-completed the earlier dominant Alpha variant within weeks which was the major reason for a deadly second wave in the national capital.

In April and May, the city battled a brutal second wave of the pandemic that claimed a massive number of lives and led to a shortage of oxygen and essential drugs at hospitals.

Delta variant was found in 54% of the samples that were sequenced in April, and 82% in May, according to the government data according to a report by [Hindustan Times](#).

According to a study by the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology that found delta to be more transmissible and better able to escape immunity generated through a natural infection or vaccination.

"The original delta continues to be the most common sequence, which is followed by AY4 sublineage of delta," said Dr Ekta Gupta, who heads the regional INSACOG laboratory at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in Delhi.

Another senior scientist from INSACOG said AY4 was the most common delta sub-lineage found in Delhi, however, there was no clinical significance of the variant yet, meaning it is not so far known to cause more infections, more severe infections, or infections in those who have been previously infected or have been completely vaccinated.

"It has been noted that due to greater diversity of Delta in India, PANGO classifications may sometimes be inaccurate, especially for new sub-lineages," the bulletin said.

Dr Ekta said, "The virus keeps mutating and gets re-classified, but there is no clinical significance of these variants yet. Being closely related to the original delta variant they are unlikely to affect a high number of people in Delhi, many of who have already been exposed to delta."

The September-October round of sero-surveillance in Delhi showed that 97% of the population has developed antibodies against the virus.

According to the sixth sero survey, 97 per cent people in Delhi have developed antibodies against the coronavirus as a result of a large number of people getting exposed to the virus during the second wave of the pandemic and robust vaccination in the capital.

All districts in Delhi have a seroprevalence of more than 93 per cent. Four districts -- South, Central, Northeast and East -- have recorded a seropositivity rate of 99 per cent, 99.5 per cent, 99.7 per cent and 99.8 per cent respectively.

Women (90.1 per cent) have a higher seropositivity rate than men (88.2 per cent). Those aged

below 18 years have a seropositivity rate of 88 per cent.

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