

 <p>सार्वजनिक आरोग्य विभाग महाराष्ट्र सरकार</p>	 <p>GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA Directorate of Health Services Pune Office</p>		 <p>NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, MAHARASHTRA NHM राष्ट्रीय आरोग्य अभियान महाराष्ट्र</p>
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Health Services	No. No. DHS/IDSP/ Omicron Variant 26220-321/2021 Date: 06/12/2021		

To,

District Health Officer, ZilhaParishad, All

District Civil Surgeon, District Hospital, All

Medical Officer of Health, Municipal Corporation, All

Executive Health Officer, Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

Subject : Regarding Surveillance of International Travellers & other Public Health Measures on the background of Emergence of Omicron Variant.

Reference :

1. Letter of Secretary, MoHFW dated 25th 2Nov. 2021
2. Guidelines of MoHFW dated 30th Nov. 2021
3. Guidelines from Govt of Maharashtra dated 2nd Dec 2021
4. Letter regarding WGS Surveillance by this office dated 16th April 2021

Background

On 26 November 2021, WHO designated the variant B.1.1.529 a variant of concern, as Omicron on the basis of advice from WHO's Technical Advisory Group on Virus Evolution.

This variant has a large number of mutations, some of which are concerning – Omicron may be associated with higher transmissibility and immune escape potential. The variant Omicron belongs to Pango lineage B.1.1.529, Nextstrain clade 21K, and is characterized by 30 amino acid changes, three small deletions and one small insertion in the spike protein compared to the original virus.

Strategies need to be implemented to contain the spread of Omicron in India:

- A) **Guidelines for International travels:** MOHFW GOI has released revised travel guidelines on 30th November 2021 and bifurcated countries into 2 categories: Countries at Risk & countries excluded from at risk list-

A.1) Passengers/ Travellers coming from Countries 'at risk' to follow additional measures, including post-arrival RT-PCR: Positive travellers isolated under separate facility & sample to be sent for genome sequencing.

- ✓ If positive for Omicron, strict isolation and follow treatment protocol till tested negative.
- ✓ International travellers tested negative will be sent for home quarantine for next 7 days and will be retested on 8th day and if tested negative again, then will be allowed to self-monitor for next 7 days in home quarantine.

List of Countries from where travellers would need to follow additional measures on arrival in India, including post-arrival testing (Countries at-risk) (Updated as on 30th November 2021). Source: MOHFW GOI.

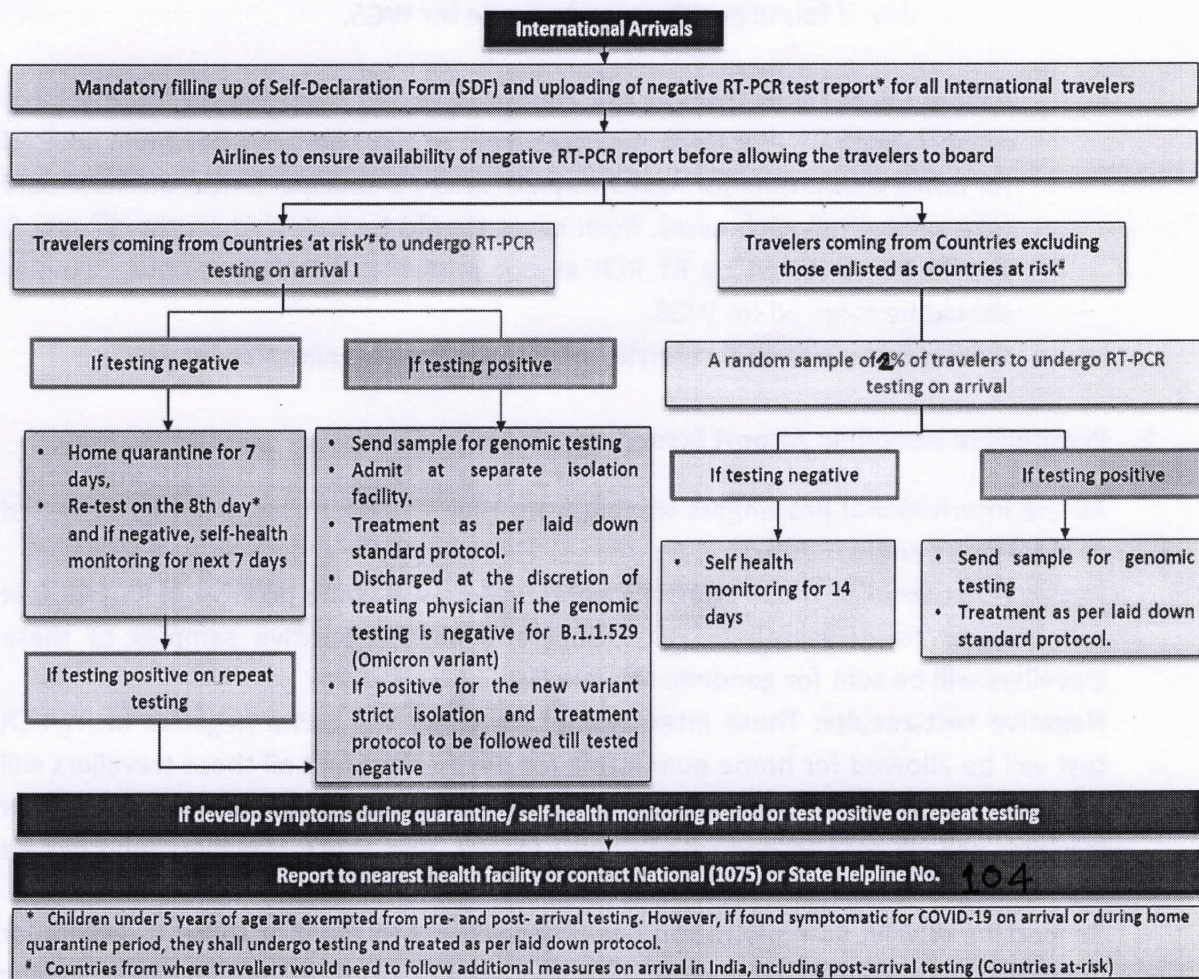
1. Countries in Europe including The United Kingdom
2. South Africa
3. Brazil
4. Botswana
5. China
6. Mauritius
7. New Zealand
8. Zimbabwe
9. Singapore
10. Hong Kong
11. Israel

(Please follow updated information on the MoHFW website regularly as this list may get modified as per evolving situation.)

A.2) Travelers coming from Countries excluding those enlisted as Countries "at risk":

- ✓ 2% passengers in international flight to undergo RT-PCR test on arrival. Allowed to leave after giving sample.
- ✓ If positive, samples to be sent for genomic surveillance and treatment as per standard protocol. If negative, self-health monitoring for next 14 days.

Algorithm:



Efforts need to be taken at Field level:

1. Field Surveillance - Retrospective sampling:

To enhance surveillance of international passengers every district & urban local bodies should be alert enough & need to follow following guidelines.

- i) **Searching Positive cases with history of International Travel:** Every district & Municipal Corporation should revisit their line list of positive cases from 1st Nov 2021. This list should be searched for any positive case with history of international travel. Lab samples of such cases which are with respective lab should be referred for WGS as a part of routine surveillance. Coordinate your District Nodal Officer for WGS (Microbiology person from Medical College) in this regard.
- ii) **Tracking International Travellers in the Field:** State is sharing line list of international travellers received from Bureau of Immigration & downloaded from Air Suvidha App. Every district/ MC should track such cases. Actions to be taken for these passengers
 - ✓ Track them & do RT PCR test.
 - ✓ If found positive, refer sample for WGS.

- ✓ Positive cases should be admitted as per symptoms in three –tier covid treatment facilities & treat them as per prevalent protocol.
 - ✓ If found negative, ask them for 7 days home quarantine. Test on 8th day. If found positive, send sample for WGS.
- iii) **Follow Up of Cases from at risk countries Tested Negative on International Airport:** Such RT PCR Negative cases from at risk countries has been advised for home quarantine for next 7 days. District / Municipal Corporations should take note of all such cases. Such cases should be followed on the 8th day & should be re-tested by RT PCR as per protocol. If found positive, samples should be referred for WGS.
- iv) **Cluster Surveillance & referring all RT PCR Positive samples for WGS.**

2. Prospective sampling: Airport Screening

All the international passengers coming from High-risk countries, need to be tested at airport as per algorithm-

Positive test results: Those international travellers will come positive in RT PCR test will be sent to dedicated COVID facility and all the positive samples of these travellers will be sent for genomic sequencing.

Negative test results: Those international travellers will come negative in RT PCR test will be allowed for home quarantine for next 7 days and all these travellers will be retested on 8th Day and if any of them comes positive, then that particular traveller will be sent to dedicated COVID facility. And those travellers who will be tested negative will be allowed for next 7 days mandatory home quarantine.

Respective district administration has responsibility to monitor these travellers for ensuring that they are following mandatory home quarantine, need to do screening for any clinical symptoms.

3. Actions to be taken regarding Omicron Confirmed Case :

- ✓ Admit the case in separate isolation facility as per symptoms & treat as per prevalent protocol.
- ✓ Do aggressive contact tracing.
- ✓ Refer positive samples of contacts for WGS.
- ✓ Follow prevalent discharge policy. Discharge Omicron Positive patient as we discharge severe case in current guidelines. Total clinical recovery & negative RT PCR result on 10th day is must for discharge.

4. Reporting - For timely & appropriate reporting various formats are being used by the state. These formats have already been shared by the state to all concerned.

- Format I – Daily Airport Screening Format – Summary Report
- Format II- Daily Field Surveillance of International Travellers – Summary Report
- Format III – Daily WGS Lab – Summary Report

Apart from these reports line list of all such cases need to be mentioned in the Gol format. For cluster surveillance separate format is also provided. All formats are mailed to all districts & municipal corporations.

5. Vaccination:

Currently available vaccines offer some level of protection against hospitalization and death. So, efforts should be intensified to accelerate the vaccination coverage, especially among priority populations initially targeted for COVID-19 vaccination who remain unvaccinated or not yet fully vaccinated. Increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage in all eligible age groups, but particularly in the old adults, health care workers and others with high risks of severe diseases should be prioritized by public health authorities.

6. Public health and social measures (PHSM):

6.1 Enhanced Surveillance:

- ✓ Proactive search of cluster cases or break through infection cases or reinfection cases or any uncommon symptoms cases needs to be tested for RT-PCR and all the positive samples mandatorily send for genome sequencing. And all these positive cases need to be sent to dedicated COVID facility for management. All the high risk & low risk contacts of these cases are tested for RT-PCR test.
- ✓ ILI/SARI survey need to be started in high risk groups.
- ✓ Fever clinic needs to be reactivated to screen ILI/SARI cases from the community.

6.2 COVID Appropriate Behaviour:The use of masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and improving ventilation of indoor spaces remain key to reducing transmission of SARS CoV-2, even in the context of emerging variants. So, all district administration, need to focus on adherence to COVID Appropriate Behaviour among citizens.

6.3 Risk communication & community engagement:

- ✓ Designated authority from the district need to conduct weekly media briefing in their respective districts should regularly communicate information related to Omicron and potential implication for the public in timely and transparent manner to further foster trust and increase acceptance on response measures.
- ✓ COVID-19 information overload and misinformation should be managed at all stages of the response by providing the right information at the right time to the right people through trusted channels (e.g. community and faith leaders, family doctors and other influential members of society). There should be a monitoring system in place to capture emerging trends to enable delivery of a targeted communication package.
- ✓ It is essential to proactively communicate to travellers in advance of their trip to help them with personal planning. Overarching changes to travel guidance that affect the general public and operators should be shared

through traditional media, social media, COVID-19 helplines and travel websites (such as airline, airport and hotel booking sites).

6.4 Laboratory preparedness:

All district administration needs to focus on ramping up testing capacity in the districts. Minimum 140 tests per million per day needs to be done. Advised proportion of RT PCR : RAT (70:30) should be followed.

6.5 Health care system readiness:

Special Isolation facility: Special Isolation facility need to be set up for those international passengers tested positive at airport and in the field. This facility should be within existing designated Covid Health facility.

As part of preparedness activities and in the anticipation of COVID-19 case-load and associated pressure on the health system, districts are advised to ensure mitigation plans are in place to maintain essential health services, and necessary resources like readiness of Control room, deployment of manpower in COVID Health facility, availability of Oxygen and essentials drugs are in place to respond to potential surges.

7. Important Links -

- ✓ List of Countries to be referred to in context of 'Guidelines for international arrivals' dated 30th November 2021

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/ListofCountriestobereferredtoincontextofGuidelinesforinternationalarrivalsdated28thNovember2021updatedon30112021.pdf>

- ✓ Guidelines for International Travelers:
<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember2021.pdf>

- ✓ Algorithm for 'Guidelines for International Arrivals' (dated 30th November 2021):
<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Algorithmforrevisedguidelinesforinternationalarrivals30thNovember2021.pdf>

Dr. Archana Patil,
Director of Health Services, Pune -1

Copy to – Director of Health Services, Mumbai.

Copy for necessary action – Deputy Director Health Services, Health Circle ... All

Copy submitted for kind information –

1. Hon. Commissioner , Health Services & Mission Director, NHM, Mumbai.
2. Hon. Additional Chief Secretary, Public Health, Mumbai.