

Anti-Covid drug 2DG good, but timing is crucial: Investigator

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NAGPUR: Defence research and development organization's (DRDO) anti-Covid-19 drug 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose oral powder or 2-DG, launched with Dr Reddy's laboratories, may have made a slow start in the city with the positivity rate dropping to almost nil but it's availability may augur well for patients in the probable third wave.

Critical care consultant and ICU director Dr Nirmal Jaiswal, a principal investigator of the 2-DG during trial, said efficacy of the DRDO's drug seemed to be good for mild to moderate patients but it must be administered at the right time.

"The drug does not allow the virus to replicate. The RTPCR turns negative quickly and the scale of the severity is also reduced, enhancing recovery time," said Dr Jaiswal, who used the drug, priced around Rs 990 per

sachet, on around five patients, all of whom recovered.

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Dr Jaiswal stated that even home isolation patients on oxygen can use the drug. "This drug should not be used with Azithromycin or any such medicine," he cautioned.

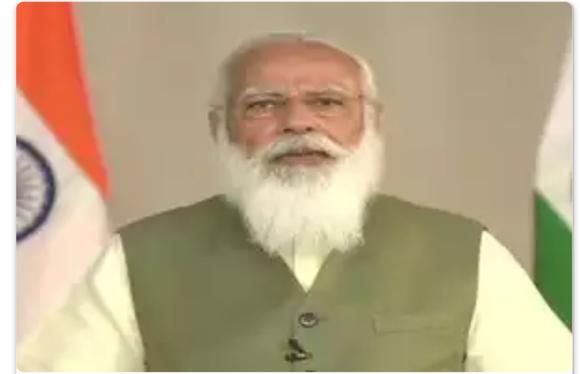
On condition of anonymity, a doctor said a patient was given 2DG at an advanced stage but he did not survive.

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Nitin Gupta of Gupta Agency at Dawa bazaar said hospitals are stocking up the product and there are enquiries too from far off places like Beitul and Chhindwada in Madhya Pradesh.

In addition to 2-DG, the Indian-made Baricitinib tablets too are now available in the city. This drug, which is supposed to be used in combination with Remdesivir, can be used in paediatric patients of two years of age too.

The foreign-made version of Baricitinib, earlier used for rheumatoid arthritis, cost Rs 21,000 for a strip of 10 tablets. The Hyderabad-based Natco pharma limited, which had entered into a voluntary licensing agreement with the original Baricitinib producer Eli Lilly, has released the oral tablet for Rs 419.

Intensivist Dr Amit Khade of East End Hospital, who had used Natco's Baricitinib, said the oral drug was used as an immunomodulator as a compromise replacement for Tocilizumab when it was in short supply. "Patients were seen improving after the combination of Baricitinib, Remdesivir and steroid had been administered. We cannot pin-pointedly state the improvement was due to Baricitinib but the patients' overall condition had improved," he said.

Intensivist Dr Sohal Parate, who too had used the local product, said Baricitinib and Remdesivir was a superior combination which helped in reducing the recovery time and improving the clinical status, especially among patients receiving high-flow oxygen or non-invasive mechanical ventilator.