

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

For ICMR's Multistate Implementation Research Study to improve coverage of high-quality Palliative Care Interventions

Overview

Palliative care is an essential component of Universal Health Coverage and is critical for addressing the global burden of diseases requiring palliative care due to increasing aging populations and rising non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer, neurological disorders, and ageing-related illnesses in India¹. Globally, 56.8 million people require palliative care annually, with the majority in low- and middle-income countries such as India, underscoring the urgent need for scalable service delivery models. Community based evidences from India demonstrated that 6.21 per 1,000 population require palliative care, with higher needs in rural areas (7.69/1000) and among elderly populations (>60 years: 37.86/1000), which leads to high out-of-pocket expenditure and caregiver burden². The WHO predicts an 87% increase in serious health-related suffering by 2060³. The Lancet Commission on Palliative Care and Pain Relief (2017) identified India as one of the country with the highest levels of 'serious health-related suffering' unaddressed, representing a critical public health emergency requiring urgent attention. These statistics underscore the persistent gap between need and provision, for palliative care, and signal an urgent need imperative for strategic action.

Despite these efforts, access to palliative care in India remains limited. Less than 1% of patients in need receive palliative care services, and India consistently ranks at the bottom of the Quality of Death Index in overall score. This deficit is driven by a number of factors including high population density, geographical barriers, restrictive policies, inadequate workforce development at the grassroots level and limited institutional commitment to integrating palliative care within the mainstream health system⁴.

Therefore, there is a critical need to develop scalable and sustainable palliative care models integrated within the healthcare system. This multistate implementation research study aims to develop, test, and scale a palliative care model integrated within India's health care infrastructure to generate policy-translatable evidence for mainstreaming palliative care within India's public health system.

Objectives

- To develop, implement, and evaluate a scalable palliative care model integrated with healthcare services in India.
- To evaluate cost-effectiveness and feasibility of the model and generate evidence for national scale-up for palliative care.

Priority Research Question

How can evidence-based palliative care interventions be implemented, integrated, and sustained within India's health care system?

¹Chandra A, Debnath A, Nongkynrih B. Palliative Care Need in India: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Indian J Palliat Care*. 2023 Oct-Dec;29(4):375-387. doi: 10.25259/IJPC_140_2023. Epub 2023 Nov 11. PMID: 38058486; PMCID: PMC10696344.

²Sharma, P., Jayaprakasan, A. K., Rao, S., Bachawandia, H., Surender, Sharma, G., Verma, G., Rawat, J., Kumari, R., Apurva, Kumar, Y., Yadav, S., Alam, M., Pushpender, Zaidi, S., Singh, M. M., & Sharma, N. (2025). Chronic illnesses requiring home-based palliative care and their impact on families in an urban resettlement colony of Delhi, India. *Palliative care and social practice*, 19, 26323524251368907. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26323524251368907>

³Sleeman, K. E., de Brito, M., Etkind, S., Nkhoma, K., Guo, P., Higginson, I. J., Gomes, B., & Harding, R. (2019). The escalating global burden of serious health-related suffering: projections to 2060 by world regions, age groups, and health conditions. *The Lancet. Global health*, 7(7), e883–e892. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(19\)30172-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(19)30172-X)

⁴Bag S, Mohanty S, Deep N, Salins N, Bag S. Palliative and end of life care in India-current scenario and the way forward. *J Assoc Physicians India*. 2020 Nov 1;68(11):61-5.

Target Population: Patients in need of palliative care: The intervention package is to be targeted at patients in need of palliative care at District Hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and in community and home settings, considering different age groups and illnesses.

Research Design:

- Mixed method design including qualitative and quantitative approaches, using an implementation science framework.
- Implementation Research study.

Measures of Outcome:

- Primary Outcome: Proportion of citizens in need of palliative care in a district who receive palliative care
- Secondary Outcome: Reduction in symptom burden and caregiver distress; improvement in QoL scores; reduction in hospitalization rates and out-of-pocket costs.
Increase in ASHA and health worker capacity; improved opioid access; reduction in referral gaps between community and tertiary care.

ICMR invites Expression of Interest (see annexure) from research teams to participate in this Implementation Research Study. Selected research groups, State Government representatives and ICMR Secretariat will co-develop the detailed protocol for this study.

Annexure

Format of Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted

1. Rationale of proposed study including the choice of sites (states and districts) where the implementation shall be carried out

The proposal should clearly state the rationale for the study, the recommended sites (states and districts) and the likelihood of utilization of the model by stakeholders in the future. The proposal can also provide evidence from previous research on the topic in the county or elsewhere, and describe any district or state-specific challenges related to implementation for the target group(s).

2. Implementation Strategy

Provide a clear and detailed description of the palliative intervention(s) being implemented, including the target population, the intervention components, and the implementation strategies. You may include preparatory activities, mapping, a timeline, steps of implementation, measures of outcome, data management and deliverables.

3. Address feasibility and scalability

Address the feasibility and scalability of the proposed intervention, including the resources needed, the capacity of the implementing organization, and the potential for wider adoption and scale-up within India's health care framework.

4. Research Team

Summarize and justify the composition of the research team based on the expertise of individual team members in designing and implementing the project. Highlight skill sets across palliative medicine, public health, nursing, social work, and implementation science for research project implementation

Established relationships with state and district health systems and educational institutions

Operational feasibility is the key to this implementation research. Include established collaborations with state and district health systems, NHM structures, educational institutions, and NGOs working in palliative care.

Budget outline (format attached)

The final site budgets for the proposal will be developed by the selected research team(s) under the guidance of ICMR. In this EOI, provide an estimated budget outline (no budget justification required at this stage) under the following headings: staff, recurring contingency, data management, travel and equipment.

CV of the principal investigator and other key investigators (format attached)

Please provide CV of the PI and other key investigators from each identified area. Each CV should include:

- Academic and professional qualifications
- Current position and affiliation
- Up to five most relevant previous research grants
- Up to five most relevant previous publications
- H-index

Duration of the Project:

The project duration will be up to three years. An additional period of up to six months for preparatory activities (with no additional costs) can be incorporated.

Review process:

EOI documents will be evaluated and shortlisted by ICMR. The ICMR team will screen applications for technical accuracy and eligibility. Shortlisted teams will collaborate to develop a detailed protocol under ICMR Headquarters' guidance. Proposals will be evaluated based on study design, feasibility, data management capabilities, prior experience, engagement with public health systems, and potential for seamless integration.

Who can submit the EOI?

The EOI can be submitted through EPMS PORTAL ONLY by scientists/professionals with regular employment in Medical Institutes, Research Institutes, Universities, Colleges, Government and semi-government organizations, and NGOs.

Points to be kept in mind while submitting the EOI

- 1) The EOI must address the specific research question that is mentioned in the call text.
- 2) Collaborative, multi-centre, interdisciplinary research initiatives from the applicant will be encouraged.
- 3) Descriptive studies, systematic reviews and secondary data analysis will not be considered.
- 4) Should focus on outcomes that are translatable into policy.
- 5) Evaluation of the development of indigenous technologies and solutions relevant to the Indian context may be prioritized.
- 6) Foreign collaboration is not allowed under the call.

Interested parties should submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) as per the Format given above. Only shortlisted PI will be contacted

Timeline

Activities	Date
Release of Call	16th April 2026
Last Date for Submission of EOI	28th May 2026, 1700 hours
Shortlisting of EOI	10th July 2026
Proposal Development Workshop	10th August 2026
Submission of Full Proposal	15th September 2026

How to apply?

The EOI proposal can be submitted for financial support through ONLINE MODE ONLY (<https://epms.icmr.org.in>) by the Principal Investigator on behalf of the proposed team of Scientists/professionals who have a regular employment in Indian Medical Institutes/ Research Institutes/ Universities/ Colleges/ recognized Research & Development laboratories/ Government and semi-government organizations and NGOs (documentary evidence of their recognition including DSIR certificate, as applicable should be enclosed with every proposal). The research team should have the credentials for relevant skills, and experience and have demonstrated the ability to solve health problems under consideration.

- The PI must not have more than five ongoing research proposals funded by ICMR or the sum of grant amount of more than ₹25 crores from the ongoing research projects funded by ICMR.

Important points for the submission of the proposal

1. Submission portal (<https://epms.icmr.org.in>) will open from 27th April 2026.
2. After completing mandatory section of PI profile, click on “Proposal submission →Click on EOI → Click on the blue tab ‘ICMR’s Multistate Implementation Research Study to improve coverage of high-quality Palliative Care Interventions’ to apply for new proposal →Fill the form step by step.
3. Kindly ensure that all sections are adequately filled with the necessary details.
4. Inclusion of at least one Co-PI from PI’s institute is mandatory.
5. PI’s are advised to submit proposals well ahead of the last date, since servers may be overloaded and slow to respond on the last day of submission.
6. For any query related to the call, please mail to the addresses given below; other modes of communication won’t be entertained.

For any queries related to the call, please contact	Technical concerns related to application process
Dr. Nisha K Jose Program Officer Division of Development Research Indian Council of Medical Research Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029 Email: jose.nisha@icmr.gov.in	Email: po.epms@icmr.gov.in

Template for CV

a) Name of PI/Co-PI along with their affiliation	
b) Date of Birth	
b) Domain Expertise	
c) Number of articles in PubMed (Past10years)	
d) h-index	

g) Maximum of 5 primary research publications related to the proposal.

Publication details in AMA style	Impact factor of journal	Author type (first, corresponding, co- author)	Name of policy/programme/ protocol Document or patent/ commercialization of products where cited.

h) Experience as Investigator (completed 5 projects):

Short title of project(Max.10 words)	Role PI/Co-PI	Funding agency	Amount of funding	Reference of main publications

i) All ongoing research projects:

Project ID	Title	Grant amount	Funding agency	Start Date	Duration of project

Template for Budget

(Staff, Equipment, Contingency/Consumables and Travel allowance)

a) Staff/Manpower		
Sl.No.	Salary (As per ICMR Project guidelines)	
b)Equipment		
Sl. No.	Equipment Name	Breakup
c) Contingency/Consumables		
Detail	Breakup	
Year1:		
Year2:		
Year3:		
Consumables		
Detail	Breakup	
Year1:		
Year2:		
Year3:		
d)Travel Allowance		
Detail	Breakup	
Year1:		
Year2:		
Year3:		
Overhead charges (as per rules)		
GRAND TOTAL		