

Researcher Presents HIV/AIDS Recommendations to India's Prime Minister Modi

To address the ongoing public health threat of HIV/AIDS, the Government of India should establish new centers of excellence to stimulate research and train future leaders in science, according to an immunologist at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Savita Pahwa, M.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, and director of the Miami Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), delivered that message directly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an October 2 virtual conference on the first day of Vaibhav 2020, a month-long scientific summit honoring the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dr. Savita Pahwah.

“I feel really honored to be asked to speak one-on-one with Prime Minister Modi at an event viewed all over the world,” said Dr. Pahwa, who was born in India and is a graduate of the

Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi, India. “This event included 16 international scientists from different fields who were asked to give their views on how India can move forward and build international scientific ties.”

In her presentation, Dr. Pahwa suggested that India use the U.S. model of centers of excellence like CFAR that are sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. “They would facilitate clinical, social, and basic sciences research,” she said. “Clinical trials in the intersecting HIV and COVID epidemics can stimulate novel research.”

Dr. Pahwa also recommended that India focus on building the next generation of leaders, by investing mentorship and exchange programs, as well as pilot research grants with defined measures of success.

“To achieve India’s goal to end HIV/AIDS by the year 2030, strong biomedical prevention and implementation science research will be required,” she said. “I believe the time is ripe for further international collaboration and public-private partnerships to target HIV/AIDS, COVID and other infections in India.”