

- Virus

Research: Good nasal bacteria could make Covid less severe

May Explain Why Some Stay Asymptomatic

The Times of India (New Delhi edition) · 24 Aug 2021 · 10 · Neha.Madaan@timesgroup.com

Pune: The existing good bacteria in the nasal environment of a Covid-19 positive person can influence the severity of the infection, a study by Pune-based National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS) and BJ Medical College has revealed.

Scientists say this could also explain why certain individuals infected with SARS-CoV-2 are asymptomatic — the concept being somewhat like good bacteria in the gut, which help fight infections. The study also observed higher abundance of specific opportunistic pathogens in those infected with Covid-19, suggesting that the inflammatory environment caused by the infection causes an increase in bacterial pathogens that may result in secondary infection. “The increase in pathogenic bacteria in the nasal microbiome (the micro-organisms in a particular environment) of Covid-19 patients is due to the accumulation of mucus, known to favour the growth of these organisms, and hyper-inflammatory environment (extensive inflammation in the body) that supports their growth,” said Avinash Sharma, scientist, NCCS, who led the study.

“There was a reduction in good bacteria, known to have a positive impact on the immune system, in the nasal region of Covid patients. This in turn causes opportunistic pathogens to colonize the site. The study is significant as it can help determine how the virus actually promotes increase in opportunistic pathogens, which may enhance the severity of other diseases,” Sharma said.