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# Massive serosurvey covering 14,500 residents to kick off early December

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Pune: A serosurvey of 14,500 people in the Pune Metropolitan Region will start from the second week of December, divisional commissioner Saurabh Rao said on Sunday.

The study is set to be the largest ever assessment of antibody prevalence in the region.

"The cost of this exercise will be borne by the district administration. The 21-day survey is expected to commence from the second week of December," Rao said.

It will be carried out by experts from the National Institute of Virology in Pune, who had submitted the study proposal a month ago to the divisional commissioner. On Sunday, NIV officials said they had not yet received a confirmation from the divisional commissioner's office.

Subhash Salunke, technical advisor to the state on Covid-19, said, "A comprehensive serosurvey is very much needed to assess Covid's true spread in the district. Currently, we don't have scientific evidence to understand the real situation. We have been relying on case detections via RT-PCR and antigen tests, which is not the correct method."

He added, "The SARS-CoV-2 virus has clearly infected a large number of people, but it is still not clear how many. This massive serosurvey will provide that crucial bit of information."

Results from Pune's first serosurvey, released in August, showed seropositivity nearing 60% in some slum pockets, with an overall 50% positivity. But that survey, experts said, was inadequate as it was limited to just 1,644 citizens across five high-

incidence zones of Pune city. Experts from the Savitribai Phule Pune University, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) and Pune Municipal Corporation had carried out the survey.

A Pimpri Chinchwad serosurvey carried out in October found antibodies in 34% of 5,000 surveyed residents. But experts said the prevalence of some level of immunity among the surveyed could be over 50% as T-cell mediated protection can continue even after antibodies disappear from the blood.