

TATA MEDICAL CENTER

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To,

The Head of the Institute,
The Institution Review Board,
Tata Medical Center,
14, MAR (EW), New Town, Rajarhat, Kolkata 700160

Dated: 06/05/2026

Subject: Application for approval of DNB Thesis

This is to inform you that I will be undertaking a study titled "**Prevalence of Occult Hepatitis B among Blood Donors in Eastern India.**" as my DNB thesis for National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS). Occult Hepatitis B Infection (OBI), characterized by the presence of Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) DNA in the absence of detectable HBsAg, poses a significant challenge to blood safety. Despite routine serological screening, OBI remains an under-recognized source of transfusion-transmitted HBV infection. In regions like Eastern India, where HBV prevalence is intermediate to high, there is a critical need to strengthen screening protocols to enhance transfusion safety. So, the aim of the study is to improve the detection of Occult Hepatitis B and reduce the risk of transfusion-transmitted Hepatitis B virus infection and the objectives are to estimate the prevalence of Occult Hepatitis B infection among apheresis blood donors in Eastern India and to evaluate the effectiveness of a combined serological screening strategy employing HBsAg, anti-HBc, and anti-HBs levels for identifying OBI.

This will be a prospective observational study conducted among eligible apheresis blood donors visiting the blood centre of Tata Medical Center, Kolkata. Donor samples will be screened using standard serological assays (HBsAg, anti-HBc, anti-HBs), followed by molecular testing for HBV DNA to identify occult infections. Data will be analysed to determine prevalence and assess the utility of combined screening markers. The study aims to generate region-specific data on OBI prevalence and provide evidence for improving current donor screening strategies.

I assure that the study will be conducted in accordance with ethical standards, and necessary Institutional Ethics Committee approval will be obtained prior to initiation.

I kindly request you to review and grant approval for the above-mentioned thesis topic.

Thanking you,

Debapriya Kumar 6/5/26

Dr. Debapriya Kumar (Basu)

Consultant

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Debapriya Kumar 6/5/26.

Signature of Principal Investigator
(with date)

I, acknowledge the receipt of above mentioned document(s) on behalf of the Ethics Committee

Date Received

Signature

Name of the Personnel