

Breakthrough in cure against Zika

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NEW DELHI: Studies on virus and development of antiviral drugs used to be time-consuming and complex because the virus had to be grown in the laboratory for study. Dr. Rajanish Giri at the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi, has attempted to unravel the structure and action of the Zika virus through computational research and biophysical

studies. He is assisted in this work by Vladimir Uversky from University of South Florida and research scholar Pushpendra Mani Mishra. The team uses computer programs to understand the protein structure of the Zika virus, which would be valuable in designing therapeutic agents to treat viral infections.

Their work has recently been published in the *Journal of Molecular Biology*.

Viral vaccines and anti-virals

are chemicals that bind to the viral proteins so that they cannot destroy the normal functions in the host. In order to design an anti-viral for Zika, it is necessary to identify the MoRF sites in the viral proteins that are produced due to encoding and processing of viral polyprotein in the host's body. Dr. Giri and his team at IIT Mandi, have performed computational studies to identify and analyse the MoRF in the Zika Virus Proteome.