

Tissue sample transported using drone from Karkala to Manipal

Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, and ICMR join together in this initiative of an aerial healthcare delivery system using drones. The initiative aims to utilise drones for transporting oncopathological samples between peripheral and tertiary care hospitals in Karnataka

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THE HINDU BUREAU



A medical sample was transported using a drone between Dr. TMA Pai Rotary Hospital in Karkala and Kasturba Hospital in Manipal in Udupi district on Wednesday, April 10. | Photo Credit: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A medical sample using a drone was sent from Dr. TMA Pai Rotary Hospital in Karkala to Kasturba Hospital in Manipal in Udupi district on Wednesday, April 10.

An ICMR post on social media states that the drone service reduced the travel time between the two towns (Karkala and Manipal) from 60 minutes to 16 minutes (to cover 37 km). | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

The Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Manipal, and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) joined together in this initiative of an aerial healthcare delivery system using drones. The first sample was sent from Karkala to Manipal, according to a release from Kasturba Hospital.

The initiative aims to utilise drones for transporting oncopathological samples between peripheral and tertiary care hospitals in Karnataka, the release added.

Meanwhile, an ICMR post in X said: "Next milestone achieved in healthcare delivery via drone! Tissue sample transported mid-surgery from a peripheral hospital to advanced pathological testing at tertiary setting for deciding if the resected issue is cancerous or not."

It said that the drone service reduced the travel time between the two towns (Karkala and Manipal) from 60 minutes to 16 minutes (to cover 37 kms).

Medical sample transportation using drone between Dr. TMA Pai Rotary Hospital in Karkala and Kasturba Hospital in Manipal in Udupi district was launched on Wednesday, April 10. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

“Reducing the time from 60 minutes to 16 minutes (37 km), this innovative approach would enable faster decisions during surgery and improved access to high-level healthcare for patients in peripheral hospitals,” ICMR said in X post.

The Kasturba Hospital release said that the primary objective of this initiative is to assess the feasibility of transferring materials, such as frozen section samples from remote locations to peripheral hospitals using aerial means. This endeavor is expected to enhance the healthcare system by enabling surgeons to perform procedures requiring such investigations in rural areas, it said.

In India, the lack of intraoperative sample transportation from rural areas presents a significant challenge. The drone project explores the feasibility, utility, and cost-effectiveness of drones for this purpose. By leveraging drone technology, samples can be transported swiftly, providing immediate access to advanced diagnostics like frozen sections during surgical procedures. If successful, this research could revolutionise healthcare delivery by establishing connections between remote hospitals and laboratory facilities, thereby facilitating complex surgeries for patients in geographically inaccessible regions, the release added.

Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, Department of Health Research, Union government and Director General, ICMR, and Lt. Gen (Dr) M D Venkatesh, Vice Chancellor, MAHE were among those who were present during the inaugural ceremony of the event.

