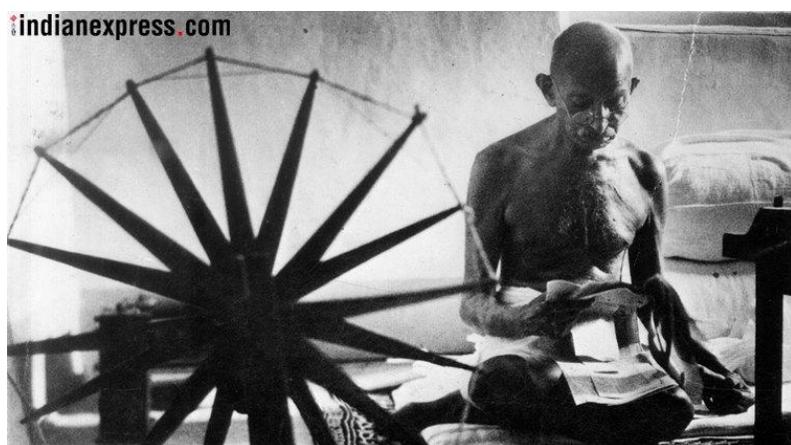


## IJMR edition to draw on Mahatma Gandhi's life to deliver health messages

Started in 1913, the Indian Journal of Medical Research is one of the oldest medical journals in Asia.

[Abantika Ghosh](#) | New Delhi | Updated: September 17, 2018 4:10:56 am



From using [Mahatma Gandhi's](#) blood pressure records to talk about hypertension to the Dandi March to deliver the message of salt restriction in diets, the journal of Indian Council of Medical Research will tailor messages related to health around the life and works of the Father of the Nation in its commemorative issue for the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR) will talk about the Mahatma and science, a relationship admittedly fraught with complications given Gandhi's views about modern medicine or even contraception. Started in 1913, IJMR is one of the oldest medical journals in Asia. The issue will include Gandhi's blood pressure records, procured with permission of the National Gandhi Museum.

"He was hypertensive and on medication for the condition. The idea is to give the message that this is not exactly a disease that has happened recently and can be controlled with appropriate medicines at the right time," said Dr Balram Bhargava, secretary of the department of health research and ICMR director general.

According to a meta analysis published in the Journal of Hypertension in 2014, about 33 per cent urban and 25 per cent rural Indians are hypertensive. Of these, 25 per cent rural and 42 per cent urban Indians are aware of their hypertensive status.

ICMR is coming up with a tagline, “Mutthi se chutki tak”, for the campaign to restrict salt intake that is high in most parts of India. “We have taken off from the Dandi March that culminated with the violation of the Salt Act with that one handful of salt. Our message is just a pinch of salt of the right kind that is iodised salt can have important consequences for the health and wellbeing of the nation,” Bhargava said.

The importance of salt intake was highlighted in a recent paper in *The Lancet Global Health* that analysed data from the Global Burden of Disease Study to estimate India’s burden. “Efforts have been ongoing to address some of the dietary risks related to consumption of sodium, trans fatty acids, and sugar-sweetened beverages. The proposed fat tax and advertisement ban on foods high in fat, sugar, and salt by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in 2017 would be a step towards reducing some of these risks that contribute to the burden of cardiovascular diseases,” the article said.

Gandhi, Bhargava said, would not be the only historical figure to have his blood pressure records scrutinised. “(General) Eisenhower’s blood pressure was 340. People sometimes wonder if the course of World War II would have been different had it been otherwise,” Bhargava said in a lighter vein.