



National Seminar on Reproductive Health Awareness for Adolescents September 10-11, 2016, Pilani



A brief report

As part of Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, the **Birla Balika Vidyapeeth**, a 75 year old Residential Public School for Girls of **Birla Education Trust, Pilani** organized a **National Seminar on Reproductive Health Awareness for Adolescents** under the auspices of the **Indian Society for the Study of Reproduction and Fertility (ISSRF)** during September 10th and 11th, 2016, at the auditorium of Birla Balika Vidyapeeth, Pilani.

Fifteen eminent scientists and clinicians from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; University of Delhi, New Delhi; National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi; Bhagwan Mahaveer Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Jaipur; SMS Medical College & Hospital, Jaipur; University of Rajasthan, Jaipur; Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; National Institute for Research in Environmental Health, Bhopal; Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi; Fortis Memorial Institute, Gurgaon and National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal delivered lectures on various aspects of Reproductive Health.

Around 400 student aspirants, who dream to pursue their career in medicine, from Twenty CBSE affiliated Schools, Schools of Birla Education Trust, Shekhawati Sahodaya conclave, and of the Kanoria PG Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Jaipur, along with their Principals and Faculty members, enthusiastically participated in the Seminar.

A ceremonial welcome was offered to all the guests followed by lighting of the lamps during inaugural function at 10.00 am. **Dr. M. Kasturi**, Principal, Birla Balika Vidyapeeth, Pilani, delivered a welcome address briefing the audience about the genesis of the seminar, how various modalities worked out and how the students of adolescent age group would be benefitted by the seminar. **Prof. Suneeta Mittal**, Vice-President of ISSRF and Director and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Fortis Memorial Institute, Gurgaon, explained the ISSRF activities and adolescence related taboos, sex related problems, accidental pregnancies and the ways to overcome them. **The President ISSRF, Prof. N. K. Lohiya**, Emeritus Medical Scientist, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur gave an overview and insight on Reproductive Health Awareness among Adolescents.



Maj Gen S. S. Nair, AVSM, Director – Birla Education Trust, Pilani provided a brief about the Birla Education Trust initiatives in girls education and thanked the ISSRF for providing opportunity of hosting such an important event.

Padmabhushan Prof. G. P. Talwar, Founder Director, National Institute of Immunology and the Director, Talwar Research Foundation, New Delhi formally inaugurated the seminar and delivered the keynote address.



The dignitaries on the dias then released 19th issue of the ISSRF Newsletter on **Infertility: Causes, Mechanisms and Management**. The editors: **Dr. Kiran Singh**

& **Dr. P. K. Mishra** joined the release ceremony. Dr. Kiran provide a brief about the theme & conveyed hearty thanks to all contributors & the ISSRF for providing opportunity. The **Elsevier's Journal of Reproductive Health & Medicine (JRHM)**; volume 2, issue 2 (July – December, 2016) - an official publication of the ISSRF was also released on the occasion.



The keynote address of **Padmabhushan Prof. G. P. Talwar** enlightened the gathering on the Issues of Bacterial Vaginosis, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, their prevention and treatment, his discovery on a polyherbal microbicide **BASANT** and probiotic combination that uses curcumin, Amla, Aloe- vera and Neem which is found effective in Inhibiting Vaginosis, Gonorrhea, Human papilloma virus and even HIV in initial stages.

Dr. Suneeta Mittal, Director and Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Fortis Memorial Hospital, Gurgaon, very eloquently and candidly explained the Adolescence related reproductive health problems, accidental pregnancies and the ways to overcome them, various contraceptive measures, strange but true data chart of population explosion at global level, with emphasis on Indian scenario. She beautifully winded up her talk with **prevent the preventable & delay the inevitable**.



Dr. Anil Suri, Convener, Cancer Research Program, Cancer Microarray, Genes and Protein Laboratory, Centre of Molecular Medicine, National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi, connected a link with the audience to make them aware of the impact of alteration in lifestyle over the onset of Carcinogenesis. His data revealed the magnitude of reproductive organ related cancers supersedes the deadly diseases like TB, Malaria and Hepatitis B deaths. Dr. Suri vividly explained the causes and preventive measures of these cancers and also discussed about his new discovery of the magic protein **SPAG 9** effective in early diagnosis and curing cancer as a sign of relief for cancer patients in future. We relished the punch line **we can and I can combat cancer**.



Dr. D. N. Sharma, Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology, AIIMS, New Delhi vividly explained the Breast Cancer with emphasis on general awareness about cancer, the risk factors, early detection by self examination, annual examination for the age above 40 and so on. Dr Sharma discussed various diagnostic methods like mammography, ultra sonography etc. along with giving a general overview of therapeutic approaches such as surgical, radiation and chemotherapies. Dr. Sharma emphasized that awareness programmes will promote early diagnosis with greater possibilities of complete cure. He also informed the audience that chances of getting cancer are more in girls whose mothers being diagnosed with breast cancer.

Participatory Theatre Session



‘I hear, and I forget; I see, and I remember; I do, and I understand.’ This famous proverb explains how the participatory theatre can play a very important role in an awareness program and especially among the students. The theatre workshop session was conducted by **Shri Akhilesh Yadav**, Theatre Expert and Moderator, National School of Drama with a group of 20 students. These students shared various incidences, which they have experienced around them, related with reproductive health stigmas and stereotypes, creating three still images and each image was carrying a story behind it. All the images were reestablished on stage in front of the audience. The audience started participating by giving their versions on stories after looking at these

images. This exercise created a platform, to share and to listen each other’s experiences. The students realized that decision making at crucial moment is very important for healthy reproductive life. The stigmas and the issues raised in the session were related with surrogate mother, communication gap and hesitation to discuss reproductive health problems especially with opposite gender and the society’s reluctance in providing basic freedom to female as a big hurdle for reproductive health. Shri Akhilesh stole the show by involving the students in the small reproductive health related skits and winded up the session with a touching documentary on Breast Cancer **emphasizing on timely action to avoid the danger.**



Dr. Kiran Singh, Department of Molecular & Human Genetics, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, introduced the adolescent audience with the knowledge on Nutrigenomics and its preventive and maintenance action on reproductive health disorders. Her talk included effect of nutrition on the genome, lifestyle affecting the reproductive health, preventive actions through controlled nutrition and nutritional

management to control the mutations leading disorders like lactose intolerance and phenylketoneuria, were beautifully explained to clarify the concept.



Dr. Savita Yadav, Professor, Department of Biophysics, AIIMS, New Delhi gave a complete insight on yet another dreadful cancer, the ovarian cancer, its prevalence, case studies, early detection and treatment. Obesity, smoking and sedentary lifestyle are linked to an increased risk of ovarian cancer. If a woman's mother or sister has had ovarian, breast, or uterine cancer she is at greater risk of developing

ovarian cancer.



Dr. Prabhjot Singh, Department of Urology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, grabbed the focus of audience by discussing the male reproductive organs, the functions of each part and then discussed the most common cancers in the males, the prostate cancer & penile cancers, their early detection and cure and also the possible preventive measures. Dr. Singh informed that Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) is the only diagnostic marker for

prostate cancer and trans-rectal biopsy for confirmation & scoring the stages of infection. The treatment modalities could be through surgery, radiation and chemotherapies.



Dr. Dheer Singh, Senior Scientist, National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal gave an overview of ovarian cancer, the possible causes, preventive care for adolescents and how a controlled lifestyle provides a better reproductive health for adolescents and elderly human. Cervical cancer may not cause signs and symptoms in its earlier stages. Advanced cervical cancer may cause abnormal bleeding or discharge

from the vagina, such as bleeding after sex or bleeding or spotting between monthly periods. The regular Pap smears and follow-up may help in early diagnosis and it is curable when found and treated early.



Dr. Rita Singh, Professor & Chair, Division of Molecular Endocrinology and Reproduction, Department of Zoology, University of Delhi, Delhi, displayed the magic of hormones and their interplay. She sensitized the adolescent audience to know the effect of estrogens and other chemicals present in detergents, cosmetics, plastics, household chemicals used in the common day to day life over the human health and more particularly, the harmful impact on the reproductive cycles and may cause obesity & cancers.



Dr. P. K. Mishra, Scientist E, Department of Molecular Biology, National Institute for Research in Environmental Health, Indian Council of Medical Research, Bhopal, established a fantastic link between your exposome and fertility i.e. the environmental and occupational impact on fertility right from the stage of conception till adulthood and about the possible preventive measures.

Dr. N. K. Lohiya, Emeritus Medical Scientist, Former Professor & Head, Department of Zoology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, discussed about the lifestyle impact of mobile phones, cell phone towers, stress, smoking, alcohol and diet affecting reproductive health. The news clipping on the heaviest cell phone users have less sperm counts was indeed shocking and alarming, an eye opener to the audience. Children were made to aware that electromagnetic radiations may affect the reproductive system and physiology, with their possible mechanisms of action, leading to infertility. The lifestyle changes of late marriages and late child bearing may also adversely affect the reproductive health.

It was heartening to observe that students took keen interest during all presentations and raised very intellectual questions justifying their interest in learning and understanding of the subject matters.

Around 35 posters on the Theme: **Reproductive Health** were presented by the students from over 20 schools. Seven of the following posters were shortlisted as the best and these students were allowed for Oral Presentation to the audience with their display and power point presentations.

- **CEERI Vidya Mandir, CEERI Campus, Pilani**
 - Ms. Anshu Lamba presented poster on the topic “Reproductive Health”
- **Pilani Public School, Pilani**
 - Ms. Sonu Jhakar presented poster on the topic “Prevention is Better than Cure”
- **Vidyashram Public School, Loharu Road, Pilani**
 - Ms. Ujwal presented poster on the topic “Effect of Urbanization on the Reproductive Health of Women”
- **JIVEM School, Jhunjhunu**
 - Ms. Aditi presented poster on the topic “What Young People Need ?”
- **Birla Balika Vidyapeeth, Vidya Vihar, Pilani**
 - Ms. Harshvarsha presented poster on the topic “Hormonal Control of Menstrual Cycle”
 - Ms. Mansi presented poster on the topic “Assisted Reproductive Technology”
- **Kanoria PG Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Jaipur**
 - Ms. Vrinda Shrivastava presented poster on the topic “Natural Fertilization”



The enthusiastic participation and interactions of students during poster and oral presentations were commendable and the recipients of best poster presentation were felicitated during the valedictory function with a certificate & applause from the audience.



The highlight of the conference was the display of a giant Rangoli on *The Saga of Birth*, displaying the sequence of stages of birth from gamete, fertilization, division of zygotic and embryo stages in the womb and the new born baby. The Rangoli was prepared by the students of biology (Class XI and XII) under the supervision of the Art Teacher of the Birla Balika Vidyapeeth.

Padmabhushan Prof. Talwar, Prof. Suneeta Mittal, and Prof. Lohiya unveiled the Art by lighting the lamp and the display was opened for public view.

Interactive Session

An interactive session was found to be very useful in which several students opened up with queries related to their personal reproductive health problems and that of issues relevant to the Society. The experts answered all questions and satisfied inquisitress of the adolescent audience.

Pilani Band

The pride of Vidyapeeth – It was fascinating to witness the performance of the School NCC Band popularly known as **The Pilani Band** which is continuously marching on Rajpath, New Delhi for the past 56 years. The school band is being felicitated by The Hon'ble President, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi and Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, every year after the Republic day parade.

The Birla Balika Vidyapeeth students displayed amazing activities of “Pilani Band” during the afternoon of 10th September, 2016, offering guard of honour to the Chief Guest **Padmabhushan Prof. Talwar**. All clinicians and scientists carried everlasting memories of commendable performance.



Cultural programme

After a whole day hectic schedule, a colourful programme, reflecting cultural heritage and famous dances of various states, was presented by the students of **BBVPS**. The programme started with **Krishna Dance** to depict different phases of the life of Lord Krishna followed by a lovely and energetic dance performance by the tiny tots; the classical fusion of **Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Kuchipudi on Tharana; Jai ho – a theme dance** on patriotism we the people of India and we proud to be Indians; a **Bengali folk dance** - performed to express joy and happiness for every possible occasion, to celebrate the arrival of seasons, birth of a child, a wedding and festivals; a famous dance of North-east **Bamboo dance** is a ritual dance performed in Mizoram,



consisting of four people holding two crossed pairs of bamboo staves, is a center of attraction during festive occasions; a famous **Punjabi Bhangra Dance** - typically performed at times of celebration, such as Harvest (Visakhi), Weddings, Melas (Festivals) like Lohri, Jashan-e-Baharan (Spring Festival) etc., at which everyone is encouraged to dance; **the dances of Rajasthan**, essentially folk dances tracing their origin to rural customs and traditions, are so inviting and engaging that they are bound to induce you to tap a foot or two along with dancers. Apart from the simple expressions and daring movements that add beauty to the dances, there were vibrant and colorful costumes adorned by the dancers; and finally a song 'Hum Sab **Bharatiya Hai**' was sang by the students on the live music, leaving everlasting memories of the programme.



Valedictory Function



Padmabhushan Prof. G. P. Talwar, Prof. Suneeta Mittal, Prof. N. K. Lohiya, Maj Gen S. S. Nair, Dr. M. Kasturi, Mrs. Anita Mishra (Organizing Secretary), Dr. B. Manivannan (Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Hyderabad) and all the distinguished Chair persons and speakers of the conference Chaired the Valedictory Function.

Prof. Lohiya, President ISSRF conveyed the Concluding Remarks describing the success of the mission of the seminar, mutual benefits of the seminar to the Society as a new initiative at school level and to the adolescent children towards awareness on the Reproductive Health issues.

Mrs. Anita Mishra, Organizing Secretary, presented a brief report on overall proceedings of the seminar and elaborated the learning outcome of the students in terms of reproductive health awareness.

Student representatives from 5 different participating schools expressed their views, concerns and learning out of the seminar.



Prof. Suneeta Mittal, an alumna of **BBVBS**, delivered the Valedictory Address, signifying the need for the dissipation of information by the students of their learning on reproductive health issues to their counterparts and take the lead of providing community services to the weaker section through the Society.



Highlights of the Seminar

- Awareness on Reproductive Health issues is a must for the students' community, specifically adolescent reproductive health group.
- The basic knowledge by eminent clinicians and scientists will be of immense benefit in addressing reproductive health issues.
- The evidence based scientific knowledge will prevent students from misconceptions.
- Providing such informal platform will encourage students to open up with their own problems.
- Knowledge gained will be useful to dissipate awareness to rural adolescent population.
- The ISSRF initiative in arranging such activities was greatly appreciated by the Director – Birla Education Trust, Pilani.
- The President - ISSRF and the Principal Birla Balika Vidyapeeth assured to initiate such activities, to start within and around Pilani soon.
- The seminar ended with a Vote of thanks by the National Awardee Principal **Dr. M. Kasturi** with an assurance that the learning by the students through the seminar will take further lead with a social cause through knowledge sharing to the community of weaker section.

