

## Silver Jubilee Conference of Indian Association of Palliative Care-A Reflection

The Department of Onco-Anaesthesia and Palliative Medicine, Dr. BRA Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, had organized the “25<sup>th</sup> Silver Jubilee International Conference of Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPCON 2018).” This educational program was held at Jawaharlal Nehru Auditorium, AIIMS, the Apex Tertiary Care Hospital of New Delhi from February 23 to 25, 2018 over a period of 3 days.

Since 1994, the Indian Association of Palliative Care is organizing this conference, which has developed, evolved, and continued to provide a platform for the voice of those working in palliative care. A growing number of delegates, representing a range of disciplines from across India and overseas attended this conference. The conference provides a unique opportunity to network and meet with colleagues, clinicians, caregivers, researchers, and educators in palliative care from across the globe to exchange knowledge and to share experiences.

The conference theme was “Create, Collaborate and Communicate.” It acknowledges the growing recognition of the importance of palliative care. This special gathering provided opportunity to debate on how to create, collaborate, and communicate new ideas and advances in the field of palliative care. We create conducted this conference to increase the levels of awareness and pragmatic attitude toward palliative care among physicians.

It included 200 faculties and 800 participants from different parts of the country and the world. In this special gathering, faculties from all over the country and world shared their vast and rich experiences. More than 50 international faculty members from 20 countries graced their presence for this noble academic event. The conference was conducted in academic collaboration with prominent international and local organizations such as Stanford University, Cardiff University, International Association of Hospice and Palliative care, Indo-American Cancer Society, Ministry of AYUSH, Pallium India, CAN Kids, CAN support, and others.

In general, 70%–80% of patients with cancer at the advanced or last stage of cancer. Palliative care is the only realistic treatment option available for these patients. The domain of palliative care is extremely underdeveloped in India as indicated by the fact that <1% of total population that requires palliative care has access to it. The need for palliative care in a developing country like India is huge, where cure is often impossible, because of late presentation and limited treatment options at that point of time.

The target population for this conference included all the health-care physicians of India involved in palliative care from various specialties such as palliative care physician, anesthesiology, medical oncology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology, pain specialist, nurses, volunteers, and social workers. The program provided an opportunity to bring together medical professionals from various specialties to participate in this interactive and clinical session and share their experiences in palliative care.

The conference was preceded by the 11 preconference workshops over 2 days on February 21 and 22, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. These workshops were:

1. EPEC India Trainers Conference – It involved case-based teaching, role-play, interactive lecturing, and video-based learning to train the trainers in effective educational techniques
2. Integration of palliative care in neonatal/pediatric intensive care – It focused on the development of communication skills with children and their caregivers and advanced management of pediatric pain and intractable symptoms and end-of-life care in Pediatric Intensive Care Unit
3. Ultrasonography (USG)-guided palliative care intervention – The aim was to elucidate bedside USG-guided palliative care intervention to improve the quality of life
4. Mindfulness-integrated cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) in palliative care – It demonstrated mindfulness-based interventions and mindfulness exercises (raisin exercise, mindful walking, mindfulness of sound, and mountain meditation)
5. Standard and audit – It focused on in-person didactics to prepare teams for intervention, implementation and evaluation, as well as team building exercises with a mentor
6. Communication – An interactive workshop for physicians on communication in difficult situations – “Breaking bad news, Collusion, and Denial”
7. Research methodology workshop – “Mixed Method research in palliative care:” to help early career researchers turn their research ideas into studies through a persuasive and exhaustive session
8. Opioid availability workshop – The aim of this workshop was to identify barriers and develop action plans to improve access to and availability of opioids for legitimate medical

9. Workshop on nursing issues in palliative care – The aim of this workshop was to learn difficult nursing issues in palliative care settings
10. Workshop by AYUSH – Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy: elucidating the role of alternative medicine in sync with the Indian traditional and cultural beliefs.
11. End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) session for nurses – Directed toward ethical issues, symptom management at the end of life, and bereavement care.

The second day of preconference workshop was followed by public lecture on “Pain is Treatable, No need to live in pain” followed by public interaction. This was followed by welcome dinner for faculties at 27 North Avenue, IIT Campus. More than 50 international faculties were felicitated for their active participation in the conference.

The program journey was divided into 18 sessions and 13 plenary lectures over a period of 3 days with each session consisting of 3–5 lectures. The scientific content of the conference focuses on how to incorporate and integrate the principles of palliative medicine into other disciplines of the medical field, such as geriatric medicine, pediatrics, nephrology, pulmonology, and alternative systems of medicine such as Ayurveda, Unani, and Homeopathy. The 3-day program covered various aspects of palliative care such as its history, pediatric palliative care, caregiver burden, safe opioid use, AYUSH, palliative care interventions, palliative care in noncancer patients, complementary therapy, research, and physiotherapy. Every day, the program started at 8:00 am in the morning. The sessions were distributed in three different halls.

After a brief welcome and introduction, the program started with the free paper oral presentation in three different halls. The program further moved on to the plenary lectures in Hall A. Around 140 posters were mounted over 2 days for poster walk and was judged by 14 faculties from different parts of the world. In the last, the session ended with quiz competition participated by four teams from different zones of India. Finally, the first day of the conference ended with the inauguration followed by the dinner. The chief guests of the inaugural program were Mr. Ashwini Chaubey and Dr. Robert Twycross.

The second day of the conference again started with the oral free paper presentation followed by the plenary lectures, sessions, and poster walk. The highlights of the second day were debate competition on “Inclusion of Palliative Care Concept in Noncancer Conditions is Threat to Medical Specialist.” This wonderful program was followed by the Annual General Body Meeting. Finally, the program dispersed with the banquet dinner at the community center. The dinner included felicitation of Past Presidents, IAPC, Award Ceremony of “Excellence and Leadership in Palliative Care

amongst SAARC countries” by Cancer Aid Society, cultural program, palliative care art poster, and slogan competition.

The third day of the conference started with the oral free paper presentation. The main highlights of this day were valedictory function and prize distribution. The sessions covered the integration of palliative care with other specialties, intensive care, advocacy skills, multidisciplinary approach, symptom management, and safety in opioid prescription.

Various meetings were also facilitated during the conference such as Project India Meeting on end-of-life care policy, Indo-American Cancer Association meeting, IAPC Executive Committee meeting, Indian Atlas of Palliative Care, and Meeting of the Indian College of Palliative Medicine.

Every participants and faculties were provided with the “Conference proceedings” contributed by many national and international faculties in this area. The conference also supported the eco-initiative by providing the eco-friendly bottle to refill drinking water.


This unique program was a grand success. It achieved its objective of creating, collaboration, and communicating. The hard work and the sincere efforts of both the faculties and the participants were the key factors for the success of this program. We hope that the delegates will apply the knowledge learned through this program in their day-to-day clinical practice and will make a difference at their palliative center. The conference broke all the previous records of faculty and delegates registration and handed over the responsibility of IAPCON 2019 to Kochi.

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