

“Redefining public health: COVID-19 and beyond...”

Proceedings for the KACHCON 2020

KACHCON-2020, 32nd Annual state-level conference of Karnataka Association of Community Health (KACH) was organized and hosted by the Department of Community Medicine, MS Ramaiah Medical College, Bengaluru from 21st to 23rd December with the theme of the conference being *“Redefining public health: COVID-19 and beyond...”*. The conference was supported by Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka and National Health Mission, Karnataka.

While the team at Ramaiah was planning for the KACHCON 2020 at the beginning of the year, the unforeseen challenges that would unfold was hardly anticipated. However, with the support and encouragement of several well-wishers from our management, Government, RGUHS and several other partners, we were able to adapt and adopt the new norm that COVID-19 has forced upon us.

Moving the state conference from the offline mode to an online was by itself a herculean task. It was compounded by several people questioning the efficiency and effectiveness of such an endeavour in the age of webinar pandemics.

Our team at Ramaiah came together with passion and enthusiasm, planned and has been fairly successful in executing a hybrid version of online and offline event. The preparation for the same through video-documentation of the COVID-19 responses from multiple stakeholders across the state both from Government and private sector is truly commendable.

Response for the conference was encouraging with more than 450 registered delegates participating in the event during the three day conference. Scientific rigor of the proceeding is marked by over 175 paper and poster presentations and nine video contests.

An innovative approach and introducing KACH talks which encapsulated the essence of core public topics from expertise in their respective fields were remarkable. Close to 40 KACH

talks have been disseminated and 5 power panel discussions with expertise in the field discussing and debating on core public health issues on COVID-19 and beyond were some of the highlights.

The conference had several activities in the sphere of public health contributing to great learnings. The three-day long academic spectacle included 6 power panels, KACH talks by eminent public health experts, administrators from regional, national and international national, both from the governmental and non-governmental agencies. The conference had more than 450 registered delegates with 175 paper/poster presentations in 26 parallel sessions with total of 18 prizes given away.

Delegates: 501 registered delegates from medical colleges, universities, Health & family welfare department, BBMP, NGOs, RGUHS, NHM and other stakeholders participated in the conference. Undertakes, postgraduates, faculty, administrators, and various stakeholders from wide specialties apart from community medicine and public health participated. 132 paper/ poster presentations which included 83 PGs, 43 faculty and 6 undergraduate presentations went on online mode. More than 100 delegates were deputed for the conference.

Day one: The first day of the conference commenced with the inauguration session graced by Dr. Dr. M.R. Jayaram, Honorable chairman, Gokula education Foundation, Dr. M.R. Sreenivasa Murthy, Chief Executive, GEF (medical); Dr. Medha Y Rao, principal & Dean, MS Ramaiah medical college. Message from Mr. BS Yediruppa, Hon'ble Chief minister of Karnataka was read and video message of Dr. K Sudhakar, Minister of Health and Medical education, GOK was telecasted during the inauguration. During the inauguration, 13 scientist and achievers in public health area were awarded by the KACH and organizing committee. BM Patil oration was delivered by Dr. Ajay, Director, TB Union on Operation research

Panel Discussion on **"The Covid19 response: The journey so far- Initial reflections and future directions"** was moderated by Dr. Girish N, Prof & HOD with panelists sharing their experience during COVUD pandemic. The panelists included Dr.Giridhar Babu, Professor & HOD, Life course Epidemiology, PHFI; Dr. Sacchidananda, Hon. Vice Chancellor, RGUHS; Sri. M R Sreenivasa Murthy- IAS (Retd); Chief Executive GEF (M) ; Mr. Pankaj Pandey, IAS, Health Commissioner, HFW services ;

Dr. Arundathi Chandrashekar- MD, NHM, GOK ; Dr. Om Prakash Patil- Director, HFW, GOK ; Dr. Sudarshan MK; Chairman- State Technical advisory committee, GOK for COVID19 Response.

The essence was to bring about the national, state and district level guidelines and implementation challenges through the eyes of the administrators, implementers and ground level doctors. The key aspects discussed were the initial planning and response to the COVID19 pandemic, existing machinery which geared up to meet the new challenges, implementation bottle necks, preparation for second wave, strategy and challenges for vaccine deployment.

KACH talks included on Message to Community Medicine Postgraduates - Dr. M.K. Sudarshan, Chairman, Technical Advisory Committee for COVID-19, GoK; Global Health Security- Dr.Giridhar Babu, Professor & HOD, Life course Epidemiology, PHFI and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagra Palike (BBMP) Response to COVID-19

Day two: Panel on **“Did COVID offset the NCD gains? – The Way Forward’** was moderated by Dr. Nayanjeet Chaudhury, Director, RICPHI. The panelists included Dr. Rangaswamy, NCD cell; Dr. Medha Y Rao, Principal and Dean, Ramaiah Medical College; Dr. Rajani, Mental health, HFW Dr. Prashant Mathur, ICMR; Dr. Manjuanth CN, Director, Jayadeva Institute of Cardiology; Dr. Swaroop, KHPT. The essence of the panel was to highlight the challenges faced for handling the MCH, NCD and ID issues during the COVID pandemic. Restructuring of the existing infrastructure to address the COVID specific needs posed difficulties. The Key aspects covered were the working strategy to reduce the impact of COVID on those with co-morbidities; NCD care services at the PHCs for gearing up to take on comorbidities in post CoVid care; trend of cardiac morbidities due to CoVid and challenges faced with the health care team and strategies to streamline in delivering quality care to the public; Self-care in geriatrics in post COVID era – Your views and suggestions

Second panel was on **“MCH with the disrupted norm – The COVID perspective”** moderated by Dr. Krishnamurthy Jayanna, MSRUAS. The panelists included Dr. Sujani, Professor, Ramaiah Medical College & Hospitals; Dr. Parimala Maroor, Additional director, NHM; Dr. Rajini, DD, Immunization; Dr. Rajkumar, DD, Maternal health; Dr. Ashish Satapathy, WHO- India. The essence of the panel was to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on aspects of maternal and child health and essential healthcare services especially in areas of quality antenatal care, deliveries, postnatal services, breastfeeding, immunization, and nutrition services. The key aspects discussed were the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on utilisation of maternal health services; child immunisation uptake during the current pandemic; the management protocol for pregnant women with and without COVID-19; the challenges faced by frontline health workers in providing MCH services;

lessons learnt from the current pandemic to ensure smooth and uninterrupted delivery of essential services; strategies for elimination of prevention of child to transmission of HIV.

KACH Talks was on Response to COVID-19 and beyond by administrators of Health and Family Welfare Services. Managing and researching COVID-19 at the field level was delivered by Dr. Ganesh, Deputy Director, Health and Wellness Centre,; COVID-19 management in Urban areas by Dr. Prabhudeva Gowda, Deputy Director, NUHM, Child Health,; Disease Surveillance in Karnataka - Dr. Padma, Deputy Director, State Surveillance Unit & Team; Provision of family welfare services during the pandemic by Dr. Chandrika, Deputy Director, Family Welfare; Challenges in Oral Health delivery amidst COVID by Dr. Naveen, Oral Health Consultant from Health and Family Welfare Services. Elimination of interruption of Parent to child transmission was delivered by Dr. Lalitha Hande, UNICEF consultant. COVID vaccine deployment planning was presented by Dr. Lokesh Alahari, Special officer, COVID-19 Consultant, WHO. Other KACH talks were on “**District Response to COVID-19 at district level**” by Chikkaballapur District Health Team and **Kshaya Muktha Karnataka & TB comorbidities** by Dr. Anil Singarajipura, Deputy Director, Tuberculosis, Health and Family Welfare Services. **Molecular epidemiology of SAR COV-2 in Karnataka-** Dr. Ravi, Retd Professor, Virology, NIMHANS

Day 3: Two panel discussions interspersed with KACH talks.

Panel on “Digital India – The new leveller” moderated by Dr. BS Nanda Kumar. The panellist included Dr. Trilok Chandra, IAS, Commissioner, Employment & Training, GOK s; Dr, Chandil G, CEO, RXHE; Dr. Arun, DD-E- Health, HFW; Dr. Arkalgud Ramprasad, Emeritus Prof., UIC, Director, RPPC. The essence of the panel was to document the challenges and opportunities for the digital health technologies in public health during and beyond covid19. There were several examples of re-purposing the existing platforms as well as newer technologies and applications brought to combat the pandemic. The session would help to bring out the key opportunities for digital technologies for public health informatics. The major points discussed were the major technology challenges during COVID; technology platforms repurposed to harness the potential for COVID; the new technologies introduced for health care system optimization during COVID; the opportunities for further strengthening the public health informatics.

Second panel was on “Implementation of CBME for UG in community Medicine – Challenges and way forward” moderated by Dr. Suman G. The Panelists included Dr. Ranganath TS, Prof & HOD, Community Medicine, BMCRI; Dr. Praveen Kulkarni, Associate Professor, JSS; Dr. Farah, Associate Professor, SJIC and Dr. Rizwana, Assistant Professor, KIMS, Hubli. The key points discussed were the

challenges and solution implemented in setting up the II and the third Professional year time table; the challenge of integration and formative assessment; Solutions for AETCOM

KACH talks was on Universal Health Coverage and Medical Institution Responses to COVID-19.

Setting up Dedicated COVID Hospital in a tertiary setup - Dr. Harish. K, Associate Dean and Vice Principal, Ramaiah Medical College and Hospitals; Deployment of Human resources for COVID-19 management - Dr. Mohd. Aslam, Professor of Medicine, Ramaiah Medical College; Strengthening Infection Control Practices during COVID-19 - Dr. Vijayashree T, Professor of Medicine, Ramaiah Medical College and Hospitals; Experiences and challenges of a COVID nodal officer - Dr. Shalini Pradeep, Professor, Community Medicine, Ramaiah Medical College; Post-COVID care: Need of the hour- Dr. Naresh Shetty, President, Ramaiah Memorial Hospital; Biomedical Waste Management in COVID-19 - Dr. K. Lalitha, Professor and Head, Community Medicine, Ramaiah Medical College.

Other KACH talks were on SDG 2030: Getting there by Dr. Krishnamurthy Jayanna, Dean, Faculty of Life and Allied Health Sciences, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences and Active Case Finding in TB & Community participation in TB by Dr. Anil Singarajipura, Deputy Director, Tuberculosis, Health and Family Welfare Services.

Valedictory: The conference concluded on 23rd December with the valedictory ceremony with Sir Jawaid Akhthar, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. of Karnataka, Health & Family Welfare Services being the chief guest and Mr. Srinivasa Murthy IAS (Retd) Chief Executive GEF (M), Dr. Ramakrishna Reddy, Registrar Evaluation, RGUHS, Dr. Medha Rao Principal & Dean who were the guest of honors. Shri Jawaid Akhthar in his address during the valedictory recalled how the governmental and private agencies especially Ramaiah Medical College came together to combat COVID 19 pandemic. Preparedness for second wave, Vaccine deployment and containment measures for the new strain of virus in the state was highlighted. Chief executive of GEF, Dr. Srinivasa Murthy, IAS (Retd) suggested to the organizing committee to video document the state response to COVID 1-9 across the all the districts in the state which would be a repository of information for future.

Organizing Chairperson, Dr. Lalitha K and Organizing secretary, Dr. Nanda Kumar assured that this was outcomes of the conference and would be taken forward and submitted as white paper to the Government. During the valedictory, eminent public health specialists, senior academicians, health officials from BBMP who are championing the cause of public health were felicitated during the function. Dr. M. K Sudarshan and Dr. Ravi V (virologist,

NIMHANS) were felicitated for their contribution chairperson and member of the technical advisory committee for COVID to the government of Karnataka.

Outcome of the conference: With more than 50 expertise across the panels, the proceedings of the conference was reached through live stream through WebEx and YouTube platform across the country and beyond. The learnings of from the conference will be documented as video documentary and white paper and shared with key stakeholders.