

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

by

COLONEL T. R. CHOPRA

Senior Adviser, Armed Forces Medical Services at the VIIth Annual Conference of Indian Association of Dermatologist, Venereologist and Leprologist Held at Government Medical College Auditorium, Srinagar.

From 22nd May to 24th May 1979

Hon'ble Chief Minister, distinguished guests, members of the association, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and privilege to extend a hearty welcome to all of you, to the annual conference which is being held in Srinagar, the capital of the most panoramic and beautiful valley of Jammu and Kashmir.

I am grateful to all members of our association for the honour you have done me by electing me unanimously as your President for the year 1978-79. I express my sincere thanks and appreciate the confidence you have reposed in me. I assure you that I will strive to be worthy of this and request your full co-operation, guidance and help.

I convey my most sincere thanks to the chairman of the organising committee, Dr. S. N. Ahmed Shah who has been kind to devote much of his valuable time in organising this conference. Dr. G. H. Hajini deserves full credit for being an enthusiastic, hard working all efficient organising secretary for co-ordinating all the activities despite the limited resources. I cannot adequately thank the government of J & K for giving permission and all the help - a rare event in the history of most of the medical associations.

I hope your stay here will be very enjoyable and one of the most memorable one. Scientific programmes, under the guidance of my learned colleague, professor emeritus Dr. K. C. Kandhari, which have been very well planned will be stimulating. I am sure we will gain from each others knowledge and exchange of views. I have not the slightest doubt that the VIIth annual conference of IADV & L will be a great success.

Object

The basic object of our association is to promote professional fellowship, co-operation and exchange of views among members in a healthy way for the service of the sick of our developing nation. To achieve this object we must have an image. I am convinced that our speciality must undergo a change to preserve its identity. We must go with the change in medical education consistent with our social, economical and cultural needs giving special attention to the rural programme.

We must participate in this programme in a big way, otherwise we will be "Cored out". Skin is the first indicator of weariness or age, or disease, or emotion. Our speciality has 45 sub specialities. In India out-door attendance of skin, STD and Leprosy patients is equal to total medical OPD attendance. Ours is not a glamorous speciality like cardiology and neuro-surgery but we also as internists help and guide in the delivery of comprehensive medical care in a useful way. Incidence and morbidity rate of skin diseases, STD and Leprosy in our country is on the increase in spite of all curative, preventive and control measures. In this connection professor emeritus Dr. P. N. Rangiah's article on "Why VD cannot be controlled" is pertinent. Government by itself alone cannot tackle this problem and I request this august body to augment and supplement the government in this gigantic task. It is primarily on this topic that I would like to share some thoughts with you today.

Skin, STD and Leprosy problem study at National level

A scientific study of skin disorders, Leprosy and STD prevalence in our country should be undertaken immediately preferably by scientific committee of this national body assisted by Government and other agencies to assess the problem in depth. It was suggested by past president late Dr. Ambadi Bhaskara Menon in 1974 but no stride has been made in this direction. No national statistics are available at present. Availability of such statistics will help in planning on a national level thus saving many man hours work due to illness and increasing production.

Medical Education

- (a) At present approximately 1500 specialists are available in this speciality and this meagre number is required to be increased to 25,000 by imparting training at an early date.
- (b) There is no cadre of special treatment assistant/Nurses in our team. Special treatment assistants of armed forces do not have equivalent cadre in civil. This needs immediate recognition as these skilled workers can be usefully employed for clinical, laboratory, administrative and health care programmes of the nation especially in STD and leprosy work. It will also enable them to rehabilitate in civil life after retirement.
- (c) The day of discipline based education is gone. We must participate in inter disciplinary teaching in a big way.
- (d) Co-ordination with scientists, social workers, public health workers, technocrats, voluntary agencies and media is essential for success of our campaign.
- (e) Crash programme in post graduate courses of the speciality - it needs reappraisal on uniform standard pattern throughout the country. This matter requires attention of medical council of India and ministry of

health and education association to take further action on the same.

Refresher Courses

Refresher courses are urgently needed to acquaint the general practitioners, interns and junior specialists to keep them abreast with the basic and advances in the speciality. All state associations should make an effort towards the same. This will streamline the art and style of dermatological practice.

Medical relief to Rural areas

Free camps at state and district level if organised by the state branches where service will reach where it is needed, acceptable to the needy without much financial and bureaucratic strain. It should be a part of training programme at under graduate and post graduate and specialist practitioner level.

Research

- (a) It is pointed out that research at national level in dermatology is lacking. STD and Leprosy research is just satisfactory but needs augmentation. Let us not ape the west in our research and we should avoid repetitive and wasteful activities. I suggest a central body can co-ordinate the same and produce faster and fruitful results. Methodology in research will have to be modified as our biological make up, social, economical and geographical conditions are different from other countries.
- (b) Research in other than allopathic system of medicine like Unani, Ayurvedic and Homeopathy needs study on a scientific basis and may be absorbed in our system if acceptable for the greater good of mankind. It is cheap and worth considering.
- (c) Research in basic sciences, immunology, cell kinetics, genetics, photo biology, therapy and skin surgery should be accorded priority.

Medical Journalism

Dr. T. K. Mehta's oration on medical journalism in 1973 is worthy of taking note. Dr. (Mrs) Rachel Mathai, our present editor, is doing a commendable service to our journal. I would advise her to make this as a self supporting venture and get it indexed in index medicus and current contents. I request all the teachers and scientists to produce a comprehensive text book of dermatology for use of Indian doctors for Indian patients. This private industry should remain a public service.

Dermatology foundation/Academy

I am glad to know that ground work for this is in progress and I wish the committee all success.

Organisational Problems

- (a) Our team of office bearers specially Dr. N.C. Sethi, Hon. General Secretary, and Dr. Parmanad, Treasurer, have done excellent and most commendable work during the year in the most trying and difficult conditions. I desire consensus in elections to be conducted in a democratic manner and there should be continuity of essential office bearers.
- (b) Discipline of Dermatology, STD and Leprology should be an integrated discipline for all purposes. Is there a need of separate association for Leprosy and STD ?
- (c) Utmost economy in man power and finances should be the watch word for running the association.
- (d) Reports by some of the committees formed in February 1978 are still awaited. It shall be expedited.
- (e) Report on National Dermatological Formulary should be published at an early date.
- (f) International conferences—specialists—should be encouraged to attend the conferences and give a feed back report to the association for record and action.

Membership Roster

This is under compilation under the able guidance of Dr. N.C. Sethi and will be available to all members very soon.

In the end, may I ask all the association members to dedicate our sincerity, compassion and skill to the betterment of our patient, association and the nation.

Thanking you ladies and gentlemen.