THE EVENT

The 12th Asian Spinal Cord Network (ASCoN)/13th Spinal Cord Society Conference in Coimbatore, India was a great success, achieving very good attendance. It was held at the Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore from 14th – 17th Nov 2013 hosted by a helpful and dedicated team from Ganga Hospital.

The theme was 'Spinal Cord Injury'. The focus was on professional development of the health care personnel involved in SCI care and the development of rehabilitation services for people with SCI. The event provided a platform to demonstrate www.elearnSCI.org through workshops for the whole team and discipline specific workshops. The conference also provided the impetus to Ganga to establish a rehabilitation centre for people with SCI.

PARTICIPANT STATISTICS

391 participants from 9 countries convened at 12th ASCoN Conference, with this year’s attendees introduced to among the key areas, www.elearnSCI.org - an interactive resource tool and concurrent workshops and tracts specifically for
the consumers. Partakers shared experiences with colleagues, made new contacts and strengthened existing relationships, and honed their ideas and knowledge. Total of 12 consumers attended the conference, representing India, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia.

The programme was a rich mix of formats, ranging from plenary sessions featuring many well-known and thought-provoking keynote speakers to intense, highly interactive discussion sessions.
PANEL DISCUSSION ON CHALLENGES AND REQUIREMENTS OF ESTABLISHING A REHABILITATION CENTRE.

This lively and interesting panel discussion enabled the sharing of viewpoints on those involved in developing rehabilitation centres in India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Nepal, within the government, NGO and private sectors. The main messages resulting from this session were that essential to establishing rehabilitation services were a team of committed and dedicated staff; and that ASCoN is proving to be a useful vehicle for the provision of technical and human resource skill development. The ASCoN Executive Committee is currently planning to develop Guidelines for the establishment of Rehabilitation Services/Centres.

Panel Members: S Muldoon (Ireland), Dr Julia (Malaysia), E Thapa Dhungana (Nepal), V Taylor (Bangladesh), Dr Apichana (Thailand) and Dr HS Chhabra (India)

WORKSHOPS

Two days were dedicated to the demonstration and utilisation of www.elearnSCI.org through Workshops for the whole team and discipline specific workshops for doctors; nurses; peer counsellors/psychologists/social workers; physiotherapists; occupational therapists and people living with SCI.

In addition a Prevention Workshop and a Panel Discussion on Gaps in strategies for prevention of SCI and the way forward were conducted.

The ASCoN Consumer Network was represented by members from India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka and a Consumer Workshop provided the ASCoN
Consumers/SCI Representative Organisations the opportunity to discuss current and significant issues and provide a platform where they could meet and exchange experiences with professionals and policy makers.

AWARDS
SCS Best Published Paper Award (€1000 - sponsored by Dr. Patrick Kluger)

There were 2 winners who shared this award:


Authors Dr Shipra, Mohit Arora, Dr HS Chhabra, Dr Nazirah and Dr Apichana accept their prize from Dr Mukjeree
Dr receiving his Award from Dr Rajasekaran, Organising Chairman

ASCoN / SCS Best Paper Presenter Award (Rs. 1 Lakh – sponsored by SCS)
This was won by Mr Peter Murray, SIA, Australia.
Peter made a very laudable and generous gesture by offering to utilise the prize funds to support a candidate from Ganga Hospital to undertake a visit to SIA Australia. This exchange will be very useful to Ganga Hospital in its endeavour to develop a rehabilitation centre and allow for lessons to be taken back from SIA on the delivery of its programmes in both the hospital and community settings. It will also support the development of longer term partnerships and collaboration between ASCoN members and Australia.

ASCoN Best Research Award Session (Fellowship Award equivalent to €1000 – sponsored by Livability)
This was won by Mr Senthil Velkumar, Lecturer- Physiotherapy, Christian Medical College, Vellore. Senthil will undertake a Fellowship for up to one month at an ASCoN Training Centre in either India, Bangladesh, Malaysia or Thailand

PRESS CONFERENCE
A press conference took place with people living with SCI in Asia and the major issues they face. The articles which focused on accessibility and stem cell research can be accessed here.
HANDING OVER THE BATON
To announce the 13th ASCoN Conference, the ceremonial “Handing over the Baton” was passed to the ASCoN Chairperson 2014, Valerie Taylor. The 13th ASCoN Conference will be hosted by CRP, Dhaka from 28th Nov – 1st Dec 2014.

FEEDBACK
Below are excerpts of feedback received from participants and organisers regarding the event:

“The conference program was comprehensive and stimulating, we enjoyed every part of it.”  “There was a passionate and real human touch to the scientific and academic programme.”  “Conference from every angle was a learning experience.”  “Thank you for organizing such a wonderful, knowledgeable and energizing event.”  “Such a lively and stimulating conference.”  “As well as the educational benefits it was great to see the level of interaction between participants.”  “It was a great learning experience for us and we are now more committed to setting up a larger rehabilitation unit. Thank you for being with us, educating and increasing our passion on this subject”.  “I have learnt a lot from this meeting and want to adopt a lot of changes to our spine injuries unit.”  “The organizing team was very dedicated and helpful and went out of their way to help.”  “Our memories of first trip to India will always be around a very good professional experience and the warmth, hospitality and dedication of all the people from India and the other countries involved.”  “We are very pleased to be part of the Asian Spinal Cord Network and hope to make a good contribution in the future.”
FACULTY

Team from Delhi
Dr Vikas Tandon  Dr Ankur Nanda  Dr Diyva Parasha
Dr Shipra Chaudhary  Ms. Roopa Rawat  Ms. Richa Sharma
Mr. Nekram Upadhyay  Ms. Shruti Sharma  Ms. Chitra Kataria
Mr. Shivjeet Singh Raghav  Mr. Mohit Arora  Mr. Randhir Ranjan
Ms. Swati Mishra  Ms Manisha Goyal  Dr. Komal Kamra
Ms Chandra Rama Rao  Mr Rajiv Virat  Ms. Nisha Rawat

Team from Vellore:
Dr. Anand Viswanathan  Mr. A. Elango  Mr. Gopinath
Mrs. Josephine Sukumaran  Mr. Senthil Velkumar  Mr. Samuel Kamalesh
Mr. Samson

Ganga Faculty
G Vignesh

Scientific Program: (Doctors)
Dr S Rajasekaran  Dr H.S. Chhabra  Dr Venkatesh – CMCH
Dr Shajesh Menon  Dr Vikas Tandon  Dr Ankur Nanda
Dr Ajoy Shetty  Dr G Balamurali  Dr Rishi Kanna

ASCoN Executive Committee members
Dr HS Chhabra (India)  Ms. Valerie Taylor, Bangladesh
Ms Esha Thapa (Nepal)  Dr Nazirah Hasnan (Malaysia)
Stephen Muldoon (Ireland)  Mr Cyril Siriwardane (Sri Lanka)
Maggie Muldoon (Ireland)  Dr Apichana Kovindha (Thailand)

Other Foreign faculty
Dr Lisa Harvey, Physiotherapist, Australia
Peter Murray (SCI Australia)
Mr David Constantine (Motivation UK)

Guest speaker
Dr. A.K. Mukherjee (Delhi) (President SCS)

Consumer Committee
Dr. Komal Kamra  Ms. Chandra Rama Rao
Mr. Shivjeet Singh Raghav (President of Consumer group)

Others
Dr. Arul Selvan (Coimbatore)  Dr. Julia Patrick Engkasan (Malaysia)
Dr. Senthil, Urologist (India)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
The organisers acknowledge the support given by both local and international partner sponsors which contributed immensely to the success of the 12th ASCoN Conference, Coimbatore.

The sponsors included:
1. Spinal Cord Society, India
2. Livability, UK
3. Spirit UK
4. Access to Healthcare, Denmark

The organisers greatly appreciate the generous gesture from SIA Australia in donating their Prize money to support an exchange visit from India to Australia.

see you in Bangladesh next year
27th – 29th Nov 2014