



PVRI India Report 2018

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PVRI India Task Force had a good 2018 and we are looking forward to an even more amazing 2019.

In 2018, we have had three successful events. The first, a Pulmonary Hypertension Update, was held in **Delhi on 12 August 2018**. It was a pharma sponsored event, which was attended by 46 delegates from New Delhi and national capital region. The faculty included prominent local and national faculty, including paediatric cardiologists, adult cardiologists and pulmonologists.

The second conference was held in association with the **Paediatric Cardiac Society of India (PCSI)**. Invited speakers included Dr Ian Adatia and Dr Usha Krishnan, along with national paediatric cardiology faculty. The conference was part of the annual national meeting of the PCSI, which took place in Ahmedabab on 14-16 September 2018. It was attended by approximately 500 delegates and was extremely well-received. Along with two plenary talks given by Dr Adatia, there was one session dedicated to paediatric pulmonary hypertension and one luncheon symposium discussing difficult paediatric pulmonary hypertension cases.

The third was the **High Altitude Leh Symposium, held in Gangtok, Sikkim, from 17-19 November 2018**. See the report opposite.

Planned activities for 2019

- A **Paediatric PAH Symposium** will be held in **Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai, on 13-14 April 2019**. Invited speakers and esteemed leaders in the field are Professor Sheila Glennis Haworth and Dr Shahin Moledina, Great Ormond Street Hospital, UK.



High Altitude Leh Symposium Meeting Report 2018

In addition, the bi-annual **High Altitude Leh Symposium, was held in Gangtok, Sikkim, from 17-19 November 2018**. This was yet another unique experience. It captured presentations, discussions and interactive sessions related to high altitude life. The event brought together a sizeable amount of distinguished clinicians, researchers with a basic and clinical background, as well as young researchers under one roof.

Scientific contents

The first day started with registration and a limited interactive scientific session. The following days saw rich and exciting scientific contributions that highlighted the extremities of research outcomes. The scientific contents could clearly be divided in four distinct parts:

- Basic science that widely covered cellular and molecular aspects on high altitude health issues
- Pulmonary hypertension
- Genomics insights
- Therapeutic protection for cardio-pulmonary disease

Two special sessions were introduced for the first time:

- Anaesthesia and Intensive care
- Special session by young researchers from DIPAS.

Ladakhis, Tibetans, Andeans, Quechuas, Sherpas, Nepalis sealand visitors to the highlands, trekkers, mountaineers and the vast sealand people are to be credited with scientific contributions. Other interests, such as healthcare of ponies, yaks and other cattle, were also highlighted. The sessions generated waves of curiosity, enthusiasm and knowledge amongst the audience.

Poster presentations

The poster session helped young researchers to define their work more meticulously with eminent scientists. They were encouraged to answer questions about their respective work. Their overall approach and presentation to the highly knowledgeable audience was appreciated. The enthusiasm and excitement was amply glowing on their faces.



Awards

The aim of these awards was to encourage and motivate young scholars. To that effect, we introduced a young investigator award: **Qadar Pasha Young Investigator Award**. A young researcher, Dr Rahul Kumar, from Colorado, was unanimously selected for this award and was presented with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' and a token amount of INR 20,000. Three awards were presented at the poster session. The competition was very tough, but a decision had to be made.

The Northeast India participation and experience

This symposium attracted a good number of local clinicians whose participation was met with great enthusiasm which was reciprocated. Feedback from delegates indicated an event of high quality scientific content for the first time and inspired attendees to initiate research in their respective institutions. They will present their scientific update at the next symposium in two years' time.

A touching email from one of the out-of-field, but highly respected academics, who participated in the event, is worth quoting:

Respected Sir

The workshop has really boosted my knowledge of science both clinical and basic and on high altitudinal sickness and its precautionary measures. Such a workshop was the first of its kind in Sikkim which is very much needed and appreciated. It becomes our first and foremost duty to motivate and encourage our youngsters into such research which can be done in their own homeplace without much difficulty. Thank you so much, Sir, for choosing Gangtok, Sikkim as a venue for organizing 5th International Leh Symposium where Research Scholars from Sikkim got an opportunity to participate. I would also like to thank you from the core of my heart for giving me an opportunity to partake. In short, Sikkim was in need of such research.

Further, I would like to inform you that my College (Sikkim Government College, Gyalshing, West Sikkim) is situated in an ideal place from where most of the high altitudinal trekking route for Gochala and Dzungri begins. So, in future, you can plan for such a world-class scientific meeting in my College. I will do my best to get permission from the concerned higher authority and help you with all the arrangements. It is a huge campus with 26-acre land and basic well-equipped amenities. We too have a hotel in Pelling from where you get the nearest aerial view of Mt. Kanchenjunga (18 Kms. distance) where I can help you with accommodation at a very reasonable rate. Within a period of six months or so, our College too will have its own Guest House which is already under construction. So, there won't be much problem with the accommodation. We will get more students as participants from all the Colleges of Sikkim so that these youngsters will get motivated to do research in such areas which is the need of the hour.

Regards,

Kesang Wangmo Bhutia,

**Principal, Sikkim Government College, Gyalshing,
West Sikkim, India.**

These interactions facilitated collaboration. The most enjoyable part of the symposium was the cordial environment with uninterrupted interaction of experts and young researchers. It provided a relaxed atmosphere for the sharing of knowledge and happy moments. As a result, clear-cut collaborations have emerged from these interactions and no doubt the beneficiaries were the young researcher/clinicians. It is a pleasure to quote a short message from one of our distinguished delegates:

Dear Qadar

Your concern and attention very kind! Thank you.

Despite my illness, I enjoyed the conference very much. I was especially happy to see Sudipta Ghosh gain from the experience and I very much enjoyed interacting with students during the poster judging session. In particular, your own students were strong, convincing, and impressive.

Thanks for all of the work you have done, for supporting my participation, and for taking such a strong leadership role in advancing the opportunities for Indian scholars. As you said during your opening comments, these students are the future and they gain immeasurably from these sorts of experiences.

My only regret is that we didn't all strip to our underwear and jump into a Himalaya Ice Lake. It should be a bonding ritual for every Leh conference. Perhaps, next time?

With kindest regards

**Tom D. Brutsaert, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of
Exercise Science, Syracuse University, New York**

In the concluding remarks, the Organising Secretary conveyed his gratitude to all co-hosts, delegates and participants for their efforts on the extensive networking that had taken place and for making the symposium a success. He also drew special attention to high altitude science as a global hub and sharing of innovative approaches and practices for the benefit of one and all. He also hoped participants enjoyed the local hospitality, the sumptuous food and stay at Hotel Yangthang Heritage, whose staff was truly courteous.

In summary, it was a whirlwind event that left behind sweet memories, as well as several important assignments to be fulfilled.



Acknowledgements

Doctors K.W. Bhutia, India and Tom Brutsaert, USA, both consented for excerpts of their emails to be published.

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