

Respiratory therapy in India – another step forward.....

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Respiratory therapy is a relatively new profession in India with its origins dating back only to 1995. Manipal University was the pioneer in starting respiratory therapy course in India. A handful of institutions and colleges have been offering the course in India since then. The need for an Association was realised in 2006 when the Association of Respiratory Care, India was founded at Hyderabad by Dr Vijai Kumar Ratnavelu, Pulmonologist, Medi Citi Hospital. He was able to convince physicians and respiratory therapists to form this group meant to safeguard the welfare of Indian respiratory therapists. The Association was very fruitful in that five National Conferences followed, each time gathering momentum. The fifth National Conference was held in November 2011 at Manipal. Known for its progressive ideas, Manipal University encouraged its respiratory therapy department to take more active part in the National Association.

Every scientific association needs to communicate with its constituent members effectively and the idea of starting a journal was born. Manipal University, especially, Dr Vinod Bhat, Pro-Vice Chancellor actively encouraged this and agreed to bear the expenses of production of this journal for the first year. This is the first issue of the Indian Journal of Respiratory Care.

The profession of respiratory therapy historically was started by physicians, both in the USA as well as in India. Every activity of respiratory therapists is backed up by well-meaning physicians till such time

that the respiratory therapists grow in numbers as well as in academic strength to take over each of these tasks. Bearing this need in mind, the journal's editorial board was formed. Since the Manipal group had planned to launch the journal, the editorial board consists of a bigger representation from Manipal. The Department of Anaesthesiology, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal has been a great support to the department of respiratory therapy. Dr Umesh Goneppanavar, Dr Krishna Handattu M and Dr Prasad K N, illustrious anaesthesiologists from this department have toiled very hard along with the respiratory therapists on the editorial board to help me get the journal into this shape. Key persons responsible for teaching respiratory therapy courses in India have been included in the board. Respiratory therapists work mainly in the intensive care unit and it is essential that intensivists are aware of the availability and capability of such a group of professionals. Prominent members of Indian Society of Critical Care Medicine such as Dr Randeep Guleria and Dr Jigi Divatia were also included. With the future in mind, participation of internationally acclaimed personalities in the field of respiratory therapy such as Susan Pilbeam, Robert Chatburn and David Chang were solicited and obtained. The editorial board is currently well represented with respiratory therapists, anaesthesiologists, physicians, pulmonologists, and intensivists. In the near future, we plan to include members from Critical Care Nursing Society as well as physiotherapists with specific interest in respiratory therapy.

A scientific journal is commenced to dissipate scientific information. Therein lies the next challenge which is an even bigger task of getting good quality articles related to the field of respiratory therapy. The respiratory therapists in India number only a few hundreds, many of them working in nonacademic setups. Their exposure to research and scientific

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writing may be close to nil. Another drawback is the need to write in English. Nevertheless, several intensivists are very encouraging to their respiratory therapists and are aiding them in this task.

The editorial board has planned the contents of the journal to include review articles, topical reviews, research papers, case reports and interesting images. This being the very first issue, it has two articles on respiratory therapy, one focusing on the global scenario and the other outlining history of respiratory therapy in India. Also included is the key note address delivered by Dr Ramkumar Venkateswaran at the fifth National Conference of the Association of Respiratory Care, India held at Manipal in November 2011 on the need for uniformity in respiratory therapy education, continuing education and guiding tomorrow's leaders. It was most appropriate that he deliver this address, as he was the person who started the first organised respiratory therapy degree programme in India, after spending a year at Loma Linda University, California, USA observing their respiratory therapy course.

India being a large country, both in size and population, each trained respiratory therapist has the potential to go to different parts of the country and either commence a respiratory therapy course or be a good ambassador to the new professional group.

Like many other journals and associations, the editorial board hopes that the journal will make a humble beginning and grow along with the respiratory therapist into a large, responsible, knowledgeable task force that will make a difference to the respiratory care scenario in India. Meaningful contributions from respiratory therapists and continued patronage from physicians, intensivists and senior, experienced respiratory therapists from India and abroad will make this a reality.

Acknowledgements: *This journal has taken its present shape after a lot of hard work put in by several individuals but I would like to specially thank Dr Vinod Bhat, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Manipal University for kindling the idea of a journal, Dr Umesh Goneppanavar, Associate Professor of Anaesthesiology, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal who contributed to every step of designing and editing this journal, Mr Ramesh Unnikrishnan, Assistant Professor of Respiratory therapy along with Ms Alisha Mathews, Lecturer in Respiratory Therapy, Manipal College of Allied Health Sciences, Manipal for their untiring help in editing, Mr Seedu Dileep, Respiratory Therapy student at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi for conceiving the basic logo design and Mr Sriharsha Tatineni, Lecturer in Respiratory therapy, Manipal College of Allied Health Sciences, Manipal for modifying the logo to its present exquisite form.*

How to cite this article: Shenoy A. Respiratory therapy in India: Another step forward..... Ind J Resp Care 2012;1:1-2.