

# Medical Conferences and Seminars

*“All of you have assembled here to discuss and exchange your knowledge and experience in the field of medical science. I wish you should discuss freely and find solutions to problems and render service to the people.”*

–Sri Sathya Sai Baba, February 6, 1993

The state-of-the-art of medicine is ever expanding and ever changing. Having current medical knowledge and skills is very important in providing high-quality healthcare to patients. It is important for physicians and other clinicians to recognise this fact so that up-to-date treatment and care can be provided to patients at all times. It is well known that medical knowledge decays over a period of five to ten years from the time of completion of studies, which ultimately affects patient care. Several countries addressed this problem by imposing rules for passing recertification examinations and participating in continuing medical education (CME) programmes. However, in the majority of countries healthcare professionals are not required to attend CME programmes, and most importantly CME programmes are not easily available. Over the years, many CME programmes have been organised by members of the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation in Prasanthi Nilayam (in Puttaparthi, India) and in other parts of the world. The goal is to update the knowledge base of physicians by sharing with them information about new cutting-edge medical treatments and techniques.

Even if a strong knowledge base is achieved or already present, it does not guarantee that the healthcare provider will provide high-quality care. Besides medical knowledge, it is important that we incorporate the five human values given to us by Sri Sathya Sai Baba when serving and caring for patients. These five values are truth, righteousness, peace, love, and non-violence. The human value of love should especially be practised because the medicine of love is just as critical if not more critical in helping patients return to good health. Below are details of conferences organised by Sri Sathya Sai Organisations on medical knowledge and the role of human values in the delivery of healthcare.

## Prasanthi Nilayam, India

### Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Conference – 2005

*On the occasion of the eightieth birthday of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, an historic international medical conference was held on September 3-4, 2005. This was organised jointly by the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation of India and the International Medical Committee of the Prasanthi Council. The theme of the conference was “Sri Sathya Sai Healthcare Mission—Sai Ideal Healthcare.” This was the first such conference in the world to focus on the fundamental principles of healthcare postulated by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The challenges and outcomes of delivering medical care with love, compassion, empathy, and the directed goal of patient welfare were discussed.*

The conference was attended by over 900 delegates representing 27 different countries. Such a broad geographical distribution of delegates was remarkable for any medical conference.

The delegates began arriving in Prasanthi Nilayam in late August, but the majority arrived on September 1 and 2. Registrants were provided accommodation and meals during the conference. The delegates enjoyed a wholesome cuisine for the two days of the conference.

Several brochures, booklets, and reading materials were prepared for the conference. At the time of registration a handsome carrying case was distributed to every delegate with these publications outlining the central inspiring force of Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Healthcare Mission, work done by the Sri Sathya Sai Hospitals, and Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, both in India and all over the world.

Among the materials distributed were a booklet, “Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Healthcare Mission,” which provided a brief outline of Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s philosophy regarding all aspects of healthcare, and an

issue of *Swiss Med: A Review of Medicine and Medical Techniques*, published in Switzerland, dedicated to the work done by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSSIHMS) in Bangalore and Puttaparthi.

In addition, there were two more booklets: “The Sai Health Mission Begins,” describing the history and work done at the Sri Sathya Sai General Hospitals in Puttaparthi and Whitefield, and “Sacrifice Is the Hallmark of a Doctor,” containing some of Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Discourses regarding healthcare and articles by various doctors about the loving spirit of service.

Another brochure, “SAINET,” was included in the package. It described the massive malaria prevention programme undertaken in Kenya by the Kenyan Sri Sathya Sai National Trust in cooperation with the government of Kenya. A brochure and a programme booklet containing the schedule of events and brief resumes of the speakers were also included.

In addition to these reading materials, a binder, pen, and notepad were also distributed.

Before the inauguration of the conference, Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed all the delegates with Divine Darshan, where He showered His Infinite Love and Grace on all for more than one and a half hours on the afternoon of September 2.

The morning of September 3 began with Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s visit to the exhibition hall. He toured the entire exhibition, paying close attention to all the posters that were exhibited. The exhibition showcased the extensive work that has been done in relation to Sri Sathya Sai’s Healthcare Mission worldwide by the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations and Sri Sathya Sai Hospitals.



The conference was inaugurated in the Divine Presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the Sai Kulwant Hall. The welcome address and introduction to the conference were delivered by Dr. Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the Prasanthi Council, and Dr. A.N. Safaya, the Director of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences.

Dr. Michael Goldstein spoke of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's healthcare mission, its role as a solution to healthcare crises in many countries, and of the need in the world at this time for humane medicine. He noted how his own life and physical health have benefitted from adherence to Sri Sathya Sai Baba's advice on healthy lifestyle choices. He also welcomed the wide representation of healthcare professionals to this historic conference. Dr. A. N. Safaya spoke of the significance of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's health initiatives in rural India and mentioned some of the recent groundbreaking projects undertaken by the SSSIHMS in advancing compassionate and spiritual patient care. Both Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Safaya stressed that the path to better patient health is through the delivery of compassionate, loving, and spiritual healthcare.

This was followed by a lecture by the guest speaker, Dr. Alan Gradman. He thanked Sri Sathya Sai Baba for bringing him to His Divine Presence. Dr. Gradman recounted how he and his practice have changed to incorporate Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings in his life and work. Emphasis was placed on the importance of compassion and human values in teaching and practising medicine.

The delegates were overjoyed to have the good fortune of being blessed by Sri Sathya Sai Baba with a Divine Discourse.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba gave a discourse on the importance of divesting ourselves of body consciousness and focusing instead on our fundamental "I" that is divine in order to serve our patients better. He began His discourse by emphasising that He, the Parthivasa (resident of Parthi), will always take care of each and every devotee.

In the afternoon, the conference proceedings were at the auditorium of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Internationally renowned speakers who were experts in their respective professions highlighted the conference. There were several intel-

lectually and spiritually enriching presentations by these speakers. Conference sessions were attended by a wide spectrum of healthcare professionals, ranging from physicians, nursing staff, leaders in medical education, health administrators, medical equipment suppliers, and government officials.

Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the International Medical Committee of the Prasanthi Council and Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, presented an overview of all the healthcare service activities of the overseas Sri Sathya Sai Organisations, including medical and veterinary camps together with disaster relief work in the wake of the 2004 tsunami. Dr. Reddy emphasised the purpose of these medical services is to attain the goal of Unity, Purity, and Divinity and spread the message of Divine Love.

Dr. Kanwaljeet S. Anand, Professor of Paediatrics, Anesthesiology, Pharmacology, Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas Children's Hospital, spoke about the four pillars of paediatric care, namely *Prema* (Love), Purity, Prevention, and Pain relief. Practising these four pillars contains the essence of Sai Ideal Healthcare.

Mr. Kalyan Ray, Senior Director of the United Nations and Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, presented the SAINET project, an extensive Malaria prevention programme undertaken in Kenya. He discussed the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations' partnering to provide effective large-scale preventive care.



The final speaker of the afternoon was Dr. Kishore Udipi, Research Director, Medtronic Vascular, Santa Rosa, California. He discussed the role of biomedical and pharmaceutical companies in making technological advances in the field of healthcare.

At the conclusion of the afternoon session, delegates and speakers were ushered back to Sai Kulwant Hall, where Sri Sathya Sai Baba blessed everyone with Divine Darshan for an hour and a half again. An unending stream of love and energy poured forth from Sri Sathya Sai Baba onto all assembled there.

The morning session on September 4 began in the auditorium with Dr. Neelam Desai, Head of the Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, SSSIHMS, Puttaparthi. She presented astounding data on the types and numbers of surgeries carried out at the Superspecialty Hospital since its opening in 1991. The work done at Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Hospitals is a testament that Sai Ideal Healthcare is here and now, providing state-of-the-art, specialised tertiary healthcare, free of charge to all without regard for colour, creed, or caste, but with the utmost humility, love, compassion, and empathy.



Dr. Hegde, Chairman of the Department of Neurosciences, SSSIHMS, Whitefield, presented data from the neurosurgical department. He cited a mortality rate of only 1.39 percent, which is far lower than that experienced by the most renowned neurosurgeons in the whole world. Yet, the cases selected are highly complex because they present late in the course of the disease, demonstrating that with Sathya Sai as our Saviour, we are merely His Instruments, as He does the Healing.

Dr. Ramchandiran Cooppan, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, discussed the imminent global epidemic of diabetes. He stressed the importance of preventive measures, including nutrition, diet, and exercise.

Dr. Keki Mistry, Director, D.Y. Patil Dental College and Hospital, New Mumbai, and Member of the World Health Organisation Expert Advisory Panel on Oral Health, presented a comprehensive overview of the medical and veterinary service activities provided by the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of India.

The morning session concluded with a presentation by Dr. Anil Nanda, Professor and Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. He referenced the earliest accounts of neurosurgical interventions mentioned in historical and spiritual texts to the latest technologies now available. Despite the technical mastery today, successful surgery rests on Divine Hands, which guide the surgeon during surgery. He stressed the importance of not getting carried away with the technology we have available; rather, we should treat the patient with utmost respect and reverence. A new line was added by Dr. Nanda to the Sanskrit verse "*Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava...*" to include "*Patient Devo Bhava*"—respect the mother as God, the father as God, and now respect the patient as God.

The valedictory session was held in the Sai Kulwant Hall in the Divine Presence of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The session began with a speech by Dr. Michael Rakoff, a paediatrician and healthcare consultant, outlining his experience of applying the human values to the practice of medicine. He noted that everyone in the conference had a sense of unity, harmony, humility, love, and sacrifice—ideals that are present as a direct result of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings.

Dr. Venkatraman Sadanand, Fellow in Paediatric Neurosurgery, Chicago, also spoke of the spirit of sacrifice that is the hallmark of a good doctor.

Concluding observations were made by a number of the speakers. Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Safaya suggested a need for more visibility of all the good work done in the healthcare field by the Sri Sathya Sai Organisations so that more people can find inspiration to carry out such noble selfless service.

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## Prasanthi Nilayam, India

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### Sri Sathya Sai International Orthopaedic Conferences 2008 and 2009

The love and compassion of Sri Sathya Sai Baba for humanity has resulted in the expansion of the free, compassionate care offered at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. This selfless love has been expressed by the emergence of the Orthopaedic Department. Since its inception on July 13, 2006, the Orthopaedic Department has grown and provided much needed, specialised care to the suffering.

In addition to the clinical services provided by the department, it has hosted two CME conferences over the last two years. The Sri Sathya Sai First Annual Orthopaedic CME Conference was conducted at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences – Prasanthigram (SSSIHMS-PG) from July 11-12, 2008. The conference was attended by 92 delegates. Besides topics on orthopaedics, a presentation was given by Dr. Narendranath Reddy on Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and Global Health Mission. There was also a hands-on workshop on knee arthroscopy. The quality of the conference was considered to be excellent.

The highlight of the conference was Sri Sathya Sai Baba's visit during which He delighted every one at the conference by showering His Grace and Blessings. Sri Sathya Sai Baba presented trophies as mementos to the faculty members. He then blessed all those who were at the conference.

The second orthopaedic conference, The Sri Sathya Sai International Orthopaedic Conference was held at SSSIHMS-PG, at Puttaparthi from July 10-12, 2009. Sri Sathya Sai Baba inaugurated the conference at approximately 4.00 PM on July 10. He also perused each one of the 52 posters, which depicted departmental statistics, several operative case reports, and activities of other departments in the hospital.

Approximately 150 delegates attended. The faculty consisted of three eminent orthopaedic surgeons, Dr. Leo Whiteside from the USA, Dr. Ian Learmonth and Dr. John Skinner from the UK, five reputed orthopaedic surgeons from India, and three orthopaedic surgeons from SSSIHMS.





Sri Sathya Sai Baba visiting the conference exhibition

Dr. R. Varadachari, Chairman of the Department, introduced the faculty, followed by the inaugural address given by Dr. A.N. Safaya, Director of the SSSIHMS-PG and Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Director, Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. In his welcome address, Dr. Safaya spoke of the SSSIHMS as one of Sathya Sai healthcare institutions where ideal healthcare is practiced. Dr. Narendranath Reddy spoke on Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and the Sathya Sai Global Health Mission.

Many enlightening lectures were given on the theme of the conference, "Advances in Arthroplasty." In addition, a state-of-the-art live surgery, a cementless total knee replacement, the first of its kind performed in India (symmetric porous condylar knee) was performed by Dr. Whiteside from the USA on July 11. Dr. Ian Learmonth of the UK performed the "metal on metal" cementless total hip replacement (ceramic on metal) on the 12<sup>th</sup>. These live surgeries were viewed by the delegates on television monitors.

The conference concluded on July 12, with a closing ceremony. The Orthopaedic Department honoured all 11 faculty. The entire faculty, and all the delegates were deeply touched by the love and compassion of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the serene atmosphere prevailing in the ashram and the SSSIHMS. The delegates and faculty unanimously expressed that the high quality of the educational presentations, arrangements, food, and loving hospitality were well above the international standards. The visiting international faculty members commented that this was a unique conference due to the combination of state-of-the-art scientific, educational, and spiritual values that were expressed during the conference. They also felt the loving, compassionate, guiding touch of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This conference left an indelible mark on the hearts and intellect of the delegates and teaching faculty.

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## Prasanthi Nilayam, India

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### Sri Sathya Sai International Dental Conference 2009

**The First International Dental Conference was held at Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSSIHMS), Prasanthigram, on January 17-18, 2009. This was organised by Sri Sathya Sai Medical Trust and the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee.**

The conference was inaugurated on Saturday, January 17, at 11 AM. Dr. Ravi Dabir, Chairman of the Conference, welcomed all of the dignitaries and the 119 delegates from six countries around the world. Dr. Safaya, Director of SSSIHMS, Prasanthigram, welcomed the delegates and shared his thoughts about the Sathya Sai Health Care Mission. He said doctors have an obligation to treat their patients with love and compassion.

In his presentation, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, discussed the principles of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and how they are implemented in the Sathya Sai Global Healthcare Mission. Dr. Reddy described how Sri Sathya Sai Baba laid the foundation for the first General Hospital in Prasanthi Nilayam on November 23, 1954. This hospital, which began with only 2 beds and 1 doctor, is now a 100-bed institution. From its inception, Sri Sathya Sai Baba has guided the physicians in the delivery of healthcare. Today there are many Sathya Sai Hospitals and Clinics, not only

in India but also in other countries, providing health-care with love and compassion to the needy. These facilities are treating countless people free of charge, irrespective of their financial status, caste, creed, nationality, or religion. Dr. Reddy also expounded on Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message to healthcare professionals over the past 50 years regarding healthy living, preventive care, and compassionate care.

In his keynote address, Dr. Vijayendra, Head of the Department of Periodontics, RV Dental College, Bangalore, explained how periodontal disease (gum disease) is prevalent in India and Southeast Asia due to lack of dental care and dental hygiene. He recommended that everyone should have regular dental checkups and teeth cleaning by a dental professional to prevent gum disease. He said that according to the scientific evidence, gum disease plays a significant role in systemic diseases. He further discussed treatment modalities of gum diseases.

Dr. Archana Lakkaraju, who received her Master's degree in Public Health in the USA, and is currently a practising dentist at Sri Sathya Sai General Hospital, Puttaparthi, stressed the importance of regular dental cleaning. She mentioned the consequences of neglect, such as loss of teeth leading to malnutrition.

The theme for the second day of the conference was how selfless and loving service could be provided to our fellow men. Dr. Prithvi Raval, a leading dentist in Bangalore, explained how he provided free dental service in remote places such as Guatemala in Central America, the Philippines, and Manali in the Himalayas. Dr. Volcheck and Dr. Bala from Arizona,



USA, described how free dental services were provided in an urban setting like Phoenix, Arizona. They said that an affluent country like the USA also has needy and homeless people who cannot afford either medical or dental care.

Dr. Keki Mistry, Professor Emeritus of Orthodontics, GDC&S, Mumbai, and a prominent dentist and educator for the past 40 years, mentioned that Sri Sathya Sai Baba has been his spiritual guide and exhorted all to join hands to serve the needy with love.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Ravi Dabir thanked everyone who helped make the conference a success. He said that these types of conferences not only educate dentists in their respective fields but also inspire them to treat their patients with love and compassion and recommended that such conferences be held more often. Dr. Safaya also thanked the delegates and said that Sri Sathya Sai Baba has given



us opportunities to redeem and sanctify our lives by selflessly serving the needy.

At the conclusion of the conference, the delegates felt uplifted. They were happy with the conference and the blessings they received from Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

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## Central America

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### El Salvador – 2009

The name of the country El Salvador means “the Saviour,” referring to Jesus Christ, and the city San Salvador, means, “Saviour Saint.” A total of 260 volunteers from 8 countries participated and enjoyed the message and Divine Love of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at a Sai Baba Conference held in San Salvador during Easter Week, April 9-11, 2009.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Narendranath Reddy, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee, spoke on the Sathya Sai Global Health Mission as it relates to Sri Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare. He emphasised the principles of Sri Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare and its implementation in the delivery of healthcare services, free of cost, with love and compassion, around the globe by Sri Sathya Sai medical professionals.

Dr. Simone Monteiro, a physical therapist from Brazil, spoke about her personal transformation as a practicing therapist. Dr. Omar Viera, a homeopathic practitioner from Venezuela shared his experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba and how these experiences

have changed his attitude towards his profession in doing selfless service. Dr. Hector Castaneda, a neurologist, and member of the Sri Sathya Sai International Medical Committee for Latin America, spoke about the practise of human values (Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence) and their impact on health. Dr. Wilfredo Barrilas, a practising obstetrician and gynaecologist related a touching story of how





even trimming toe nails of old people in the nursing homes gave him as much professional satisfaction and joy as performing the most complicated procedures. Many participated, including the country chairmen from Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and El Salvador.

Guests were shown the awe-inspiring service projects done by the Sathya Sai Organisation of El

Salvador. The youth presented a drama of the true story of a miraculous recovery by a terminally ill teen youth in El Salvador by the Blessings and Grace of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Each evening featured a captivating musical programme by local artists. These Divine memories left an indelible impression on the hearts of the attendees.

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## Europe

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### Germany – Hannover Medical School April 2008

The first medical conference of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Germany was held at Hannover Medical School on April 25, 2008. The objective of the conference was to make the general public and health professionals aware of the significance of Sathya Sai Human Values in the field of medicine and give an overview of the humanitarian healthcare projects undertaken by Sri Sathya Sai Baba all over the world. About 150 participants, consisting of medical professionals from Germany, Austria, and the UK and members of the German Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, attended the conference. Three keynote speakers illustrated the guiding principles of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare with personal experiences in their own medical practice.

The first keynote speaker, Dr. Venkatraman Sadanand, a renowned paediatric neurosurgeon from Canada and a member of the International Medical Committee of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, presented the philosophy and core elements of Sri Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare. He shared his personal experiences and gave specific examples from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings on how to practise human values—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love, and Non-violence in the field of healthcare. The next speaker, Dr. Joseph Phaneuf, a dermatologist from the USA and Vice Chairman of the USA Medical Committee of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, presented the Ashland Free Medical Clinic in California as an example of providing free healthcare with love and compassion. He also shared



his valuable experiences of practising the human values. Dr. Surendra Upadhyay, a consultant ophthalmologist from the United Kingdom and a member of the International Medical Committee of Sri Sathya Sai Organisation, spoke on many of his experiences with the international medical camps in Russia and Africa. The conference concluded with a question and answer session. At the end of the conference, the Dean of the medical school in Hannover praised the humanitarian mega projects of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and hoped that more healthcare workers would learn from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Love, which is the basis for the success of these major projects.

## **UK – Medical Conference: “The Humanisation of Medicine”**

Anational medical conference was held in London on May 21, 2006 on the theme “The Humanisation of Medicine.” The purpose of the conference was to draw attention to the healthcare mission of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The first speaker was Sri Ishver Patel, Central Coordinator of Sathya Sai Organisation in the UK and Ireland. He described the activities undertaken by Sathya Sai physicians in the world: the international medical camps, the General Hospital rotations and the medical activities in the UK and Ireland. The next speaker was Dr. Suresh Govind, an infectious diseases specialist. He said that the humanisation of medicine required the practice of harmony of thought, word and deed in daily life. By attending medical camps



in deprived areas, doctors themselves would gain tremendously because they would gradually develop an attitude of compassion and love towards each individual they treated.

The next speaker was Dr. Puvanachandra, Member, International Medical Committee. He spoke on the Prasanthi General Hospital rotations for physicians. As part of his talk, he gave a detailed background of the evolution of the hospital, a succinct synopsis of the criteria for enrolling on the roster and the benefits to be gained by working in the Temples of Healing built by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Another member of the International Medical Committee, Dr. Surendra Upadhyay, recalled numerous anecdotes about medical camps, experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba and about the late Mother Teresa. The next speaker was the National Service Coordinator, Sri Bharat Handa, who spoke on service activities in the United Kingdom and explained the key aspects of selfless service. He was followed by Professor Keith Critchlow, architect of the Super Specialty Hospital, Puttaparthi who spoke on “Temples of Healing and the Divine Architect.” He also showed photographs of the very first sketch of the Puttaparthi Hospital. It was remarkable how the initial sketch was identical to the finished hospital. The conference concluded with a comprehensive summary by Ms. Shobhna Patel, the Chairperson of the Sathya Sai Organisation of the United Kingdom.

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## **Australia, Fiji and New Zealand**

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### **Fiji – Medical Conference: “Make the Difference”**

The inaugural Combined Medical Conference of the Sathya Sai Service Organisation of Australia, University of Fiji, and the Sathya Sai Service Organisation of Fiji was held on July 12, 2008, at the Saweni, Lautoka campus of the University of Fiji. The theme of the conference was “Make the Difference.” The conference was opened by the high commissioner for the government of India. The Dean of the University of Fiji Medical School, the vice chancellor of the university, and the Chairman of the Sathya Sai Service

Organisation participated in the opening ceremony. Prof. Rajat Gyaneshwar, Dr. Gunu Naker and Dr. Nadana Chandran organised the conference.

The main goals of this conference were to emphasise the principles of Sri Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare, to identify the healthcare problems in Fiji and establish strategies to address those problems, and to encourage healthcare professionals to take part in service projects. There were excellent presentations from several of the medical team members and invited

speakers. The invited speakers included the Director of Curative Services from the Fiji Ministry of Health, Dr. Ami Chand, and a senior physician from the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Dr. Gyaneshwar Rao. A Sydney orthodontist, Dr. Christine Underhill, Dr. Shanta Muller from the University of Fiji, and Dr. Namrita Mesuria, a young dentist from Fiji, were the other three invited speakers. Dr. Ami Chand stated that the Ministry of Health has identified a triple health burden for the country: non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, communicable diseases (dengue and typhoid), and psychosocial health problems (suicide, MVA, domestic violence, and sports injuries). He

said the major challenge facing the Ministry of Health in providing healthcare was a lack of resources (workforce, infrastructure, equipment, supplies). Dr. Gyaneshwar Rao told the conference that 82 percent of deaths in Fiji were due to NCD, 10 percent were due to communicable diseases, maternal, and perinatal causes, and 8 percent were due to injuries and poisoning. He argued that the provision of healthcare should not be constrained by lack of resources. Much can be done within existing resources by exercising common sense and good medical practice.

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## Medical Seminars

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### Argentina

Medical education and health care policies: For the first time in Argentina, a one-day seminar was organised for public health professionals on August 9, 2006. The seminar covering the topic of loving, compassionate healthcare and quality of life was organised by the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation and co-sponsored by the Institute of Neurobiology and the Secretary of Science and Technology. The meeting was attended by 70 health professionals. In his opening address, the Director of the Institute of Neurobiology remarked that this was the first time such an approach to modern medicine was being taken, and he thanked the leadership of the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation for it. Other speakers reiterated that paying attention to the patient's mind and spirit complements the role of modern medicine, citing the example of such pioneering work in healthcare by the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences in India. This was followed by a description of the work done by the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation in Argentina with particular reference to weekly medical camps run in villages. All participants expressed a sense of gratitude to the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation for the renewed

approach to healthcare with attention to the body, mind, and spirit.

- **Communal Medical Services Internships** An internship in communal medical services is offered for new medical practitioners in the medical camps of Gran Buenos Aires.
- **Communal Mental Health Course** Periodic meetings are organised with professionals specialising in mental health in order to structure and supervise the communal mental health activities.
- **Health and Human Values Research** A group of volunteers select all relevant information regarding human values in health. Periodic meetings are held that are focused on the research and deepening of this subject.

### Bolivia

On February 12-15, 2008, the Doctor Percy Boland Municipal Hospital for Women in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, hosted the Sri Sathya Sai Human Values Seminar. The four-day seminar attended by 207 staff members was designed to help medical professionals infuse human values into their work. Participants learned how the five human values, especially love,

can be even more important than medicine in bringing patients back to good health. Feedback from the medical professionals who attended the seminar confirmed that this was a very inspiring event. Many doctors commented that the human values seminar helped them to be more effective in their professional practice. It also made them happier while doing their work. The hospital administration has agreed to follow up the human values seminar by stipulating one human value to be practised by the staff every month, using materials supplied by Sri Sathya Sai Organisation.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Seminars were conducted for medical professionals in the medical college and for the general public on May 21, 2005 in the city of Modrièki Lug in the Republika Srpska region of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **Colombia**

The Sathya Sai Organisation conducts conferences every month on spirituality and health, which are open to the public. To date, 18 conferences have taken place, attended by approximately 4,000 people. Proceedings of the conferences have been made available to the public.



A monthly Sathya Sai Health Seminar in Colombia

## **Summary**

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said that the duty of the physician is not just to treat, but to treat with love and compassion and teach the patient in such a way that the patient is better informed about disease factors and does not have to frequently return to the physician.

These conferences and seminars are a testimony to the fact that Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Healthcare Mission is rapidly taking root in several countries throughout the world. Sai Ideal Healthcare is globally achievable and sustainable if individuals, spiritual organisations, and healthcare professionals commit themselves to this goal.

In addition, this ideal healthcare philosophy reinforces the delivery of patient-centred care at all levels of the industry with diligence, dedication, and determination together with love, humility, humanity, compassion, empathy, and self-sacrifice. This approach has been the singular goal in the wide spectrum of activities undertaken under the direction and inspiration of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The outpouring of love and appreciation by all concerned during these activities has been touching and phenomenal.

Many countries are presently experiencing serious problems with healthcare delivery, making healthcare an important topic of their political agendas. Sri Sathya Sai Baba's message and healthcare mission provides a different perspective to those issues by making medicine more humane and patient-centred.

The essence of Sri Sathya Sai ideal healthcare is reflected by an excerpt from Sri Sathya Sai Baba's discourse in August 1976:

*"Look upon (your patients) as your own kith and kin, as your special guests and as your closest friends, and attend to them lovingly and with unflinching care. I call you to maintain this attitude in every situation."*

At these various medical conferences and seminars, delegates from all over the world were inspired by Sri Sathya Sai Baba's healthcare mission and His teachings on patient care. They took this message to their own communities, and through their own examples, will serve as beacons of Sathya Sai Ideal Healthcare.