
Conference Summaries

2nd International Conference on AIDS in India, December 1999

The 2nd International Conference on AIDS in India, which was organized by the Department of Experimental Medicine, Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, was held in Chennai, India, on December 5-8, 1999. In addition to the national delegates, the conference was attended by 652 national and international experts.

On December 6, the first AIDS Society of India was formed and inaugurated by Mark Wainberg, president of the International AIDS Society.

HIV/AIDS prevalence is increasing in India, where as many as 8 million people may be infected. Available interventions are not adequate. The conference participants recommended the following prevention measures:

The Chennai Statement

1. Simplified, low-cost medical interventions (including antiviral drugs, which can substantially reduce mother-to-infant HIV transmission, should be implemented.
2. Medicines against HIV and opportunistic infections should be made affordable and accessible, and discrimination against HIV-infected persons in the workplace, health-care industry, and other social contexts should be addressed.
3. Medical professionals should receive special training in the treatment of HIV infection and disease. Formal training leading to postgraduate qualification in HIV medicine will improve the quality and equity of health care for infected persons in various clinical settings. Similarly, formal training toward postgraduate qualification in transfusion medicine will improve blood safety and the use of blood components, and thus the use of donated blood. The Medical Council of India and medical universities around the country should develop such postgraduate training.
4. Folklore, traditions, and other elements of Indian culture should be systematically reviewed and adapted to teaching children and youth about responsible, safe behavior to

prepare them for their roles as future parents. Medical systems in India should be rigorously and scientifically evaluated by multicenter studies, and improvements in treating HIV disease should be introduced.

5. India must invest in research to develop vaccines and antiviral and antimicrobial drugs for the prevention and treatment of HIV disease and opportunistic infections.
6. Cooperative efforts should be made within India to collaborate with international coalitions for the prevention, control, and treatment of HIV/AIDS.
7. In all strategic planning, the voice of the people, particularly the voice of infected people, must be taken into account.

We believe that the above recommendations will help control the AIDS epidemic, with all its socioeconomic implications, in India.

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Workshop on Micronutrients and Infectious Diseases: Cellular and Molecular Immunomodulatory Mechanisms

Epidemiologic and clinical data, as well as experimental studies, suggest a bidirectional interaction between micronutrients and infectious pathogens. While nutritional deficiencies can alter several aspects of the innate and acquired immune responses to pathogens, some infectious diseases alter the nutritional status of the host and the host's ability to absorb micronutrients. Nutritional deficiencies may also influence pathogen mutations directly, affecting virulence and clinical outcome. These interactions depend on a number of other variables, including the severity of micronutrient deficiency, the age and clinical condition of the host, and a variety of environmental factors.

To address issues pertinent to understanding the role(s) of micronutrients in the control of infectious disease, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases organized a 2-day meeting, cosponsored by the Office of Dietary Supplements, National Institutes of