

Conference report: ASPICON-2022: 4th National Conference on Antimicrobial Stewardship in India

The anti microbial stewardship committee of all India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur hosted the 4th national conference on AMSP under the aegis of society for anti microbial stewardship practices in India (SASPI) on 13th and 14th November, with a pre conference workshop held on 12th of November, 2022 in premises of our prestigious institute.

The preparations of the conference started way back in May-June. The AMSP committee members had meeting regarding the feasibility and dates of the conference and after permission from the Hon Director, the dates were finalized. The committee decided to organize a small contest amongst the post graduate residents and senior residents and other faculty members for the selection of the theme of the conference. From the various entries received the committee after discussion voted for the theme: “Bad Bugs No Drugs: Time to Escalate AMSP measures”. The theme was suggested by Dr Harman, PG JR from department of Microbiology.

The organizing committee took a conscious decision to conduct the conference in hybrid mode for the wider coverage. More than 450 delegates and more than 100 participants registered for the conference (via online and offline mode), and for the workshop respectively.

Participants came together for a discussion on the unique and upcoming topic of antimicrobial stewardship and instilling its spirit and realisation of the importance of a robust AMSP team in a hospital in the current AMR (antimicrobial resistance) scenario.

The goal of the conference was to bring experts of various fields and aspects of AMSP under one roof to discuss the day to day implementation and formulation of a future plans to make antimicrobial stewardship an essential and indispensable part of patient care.

We were fortunate to have eminent speakers with us all through the conference to enlighten us with their knowledge and share their experiences.

The conference was graced by the presence of our chief guest Prof. (Dr) Balram Bhargava , Padma Shri ,Ex-Director General of Indian Council of Medical research (ICMR) and the one man at the forefront of the fight, whether we talk about the COVID -19 pandemic we faced, or the issue of AMR that we are currently dealing with.

Pre conference workshop: 12th November 2022-12-02

A preconference workshop titled: AMSP: Bench to bedside, was organized on 12th November 2022. The aim of the workshop was to give hands on experience to the delegates regarding interpretation of the antibiotic sensitivity reports in the clinical care of the patient and rationalization of the antibiotic usage.

The workshop was held in the lecture theatre in the institutional building of AIIMS, Raipur.

The 1st session was aimed at simplifying the interpretation of bacterial culture sensitivity report with various clinicians, clinical pharmacologists and clinical microbiologists actively participating in it. This session was taken by Prof.Dr Sumit Rai, Additional Professor and Head of Clinical Microbiology at AIIMS, Mangalagiri and Dr Debabrata Dash, Assistant Professor from the same institute and department. Dr Sumit Rai, in his session shared few real antibiotics reports from reputed laboratories and helps the delegates to understand the fallacies in reporting and the intricacies of interpretation for the clinical scenario. He stressed on the need to have good dialogue between the clinicians and clinical microbiologist. Dr Debabrata discussed about the role of antifungal stewardship.

The post lunch session was to make the participants understand the importance of right antibiotic, at the right dose and for the right duration, it was through and through interactive session with many team activities. This session was conducted by Prof.Dr Nusrat Shafiq, Professor and Head of Pharmacology Department at PGIMER, Chandigarh and her colleagues from PGIMER, Chandigarh. Dr Nusrat emphasised on the role of having a good clinical Pharmacologist in the AMSP team.

Both the sessions were very well appreciated by the delegates.

The day concluded with high tea at department of microbiology.

Day 1: 13th November 2022 Sunday

The first scientific session of the conference started sharp at 9am with an online lecture by Dr Abdul Ghafur, Senior Consultant and Adjunct Professor in Infectious disease at Apollo, Chennai. He deliberated on an important topic of incorporating multidisciplinary team in stewardship program. Dr Abdul Ghafur is a leading figure in academic policy advocacy in the field of tackling antibiotic resistance.

2nd session was taken by Dr Vandana K E, Professor and Head of Department, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal which focused on diagnostic stewardship as an unmet need and elaborated on all the aspects of the above mentioned topic.

3rd session was by Dr Nusrat Shafiq, Professor, Clinical Pharmacology unit, Department of Pharmacology, PGIMER, Chandigarh where she enlightened the delegates with pharmacological perspective on AMSP, stating various examples from her own experience; she stated the importance of audits when it comes to antibiotic consumption.

The final talk in this scientific session was by Dr Debabrata Dash, Assistant Professor, AIIMS Mangalagiri where he answered the current important question of whether COVID increase AMR.

On the first day we had the inaugural ceremony of the conference where the stage was graced by many illustrious dignitaries like Prof (Dr) Balram Bhargava, Padma Shri who was the chief guest of the function, Prof (Dr) Nitin M Nagarkar, Director and CEO, AIIMS, Raipur who was the guest of honour. We also had office bearers of SASPI (Society of Antimicrobial Stewardship Practices in India) Dr (Prof) Nusrat Shafiq- President of SASPI, Dr P. K. Panda, Secretary of SASPI, Dean academics of AIIMS, Raipur and one of the co-patrons of ASPICON-2022, DrAlok Chandra Agarwal, organizing chairperson of ASPICON 2022 Dr Padma Das, and organizing secretary of ASPICON 2022 Dr Tushar Jagzape, on the stage.

In the beginning Dr Padma Das, formally welcomed all the dignitaries, guest speakers and delegates for the conference. This was followed by the address of Dr Alok Agarwal, Dean Academics, AIIMS, Raipur, and also by Dr (Prof) Nusrat Shafiq- President of SASPI. The annual report presentation was done by the member secretary of SASPI, Dr P. K. Panda.

Hon Director Prof (Dr) Nitin M Nagarkar also addressed the gathering and highlighted importance of AMSP and lauded the AMSP Committee for the organisation the national conference. The conference souvenir and abstract book was, then released at the hands of the chief guest followed by his address. The inaugural ceremony was concluded by the proposal of the vote of thanks by Dr Tushar Jagzape.

After a short tea break a key note address was delivered by Prof(Dr) Balram Bhargav, Padma Shri on India's tryst with COVID-19. In his address Prof Bhargava shared the firsthand account of the challenges faced by the country due to COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine development and how ICMR and Indian scientists overcome these challenges. He highlighted the human resilience, innovations in the field of medical sciences which helped India in its fight against the pandemic.

The first day also had the poster walk where over 40 participants presented their posters on the topics related to AMSP. Four esteemed judges evaluated the posters and best three posters were given prizes during the valedictory function.

Second scientific session of day 1

It started with an online session from Prof.Dr Rajeev Soman, Infectious Diseases physician concerning the optimisation of stewardship intervention in ICU in critically ill patients.

The next talk was on AMSP measures in OPD settings, and it was taken by Dr V Ramasubramanian, Head of Department of Infectious Diseases, HIV & Tropical Medicine, Apollo hospital, Chennai.

It was followed by a debate on the topic implementing AMSP –right infrastructure or right attitude between Dr Atul Jindal , Additional professor, Department of Paediatrics, AIIMS Raipur and Dr Manisa Sahu, Consultant Microbiology, Head lab services, Chairperson HICC, Balco Medical center, Raipur moderated by Dr Vandana K E.

The final session of the day by Dr Sumit Rai, Professor and Head of department of Clinical Microbiology, AIIMS Magalagiri, on the all important topic of Antibigrams in healthcare and what information we get from them and how to put them to use.

The day concluded with the General Body Meeting of SASPI.

Day 2

The day began with oral paper presentation in award and free category, numerous candidates presented impressive oral papers encompassing and highlighting various aspects of AMSP.

The sessions were conducted in parallel in the auditorium and LT-4. The judges for award papers were Dr Divyashree S, Infectious Diseases Consultant, MGM new Bombay hospital and Dr Sumit Rai, Professor and Head of department of Clinical Microbiology, AIIMS Magalagiri.

Prize winners for the oral paper presentation were as follows:

1st prize winner, Dr Abhiram, Intern, AIIMS, Raipur and the winner of the second prize was Dr Madhusudan Singh, DM Clinical Pharmacology resident, AIIMS, Raipur

One of the constant features of all ASPICONs is the session on journey so far. In this session members/ representatives of various INIs share their experience and activities undertaken and best practices related to AMSP in their respective institutes. The SASPI emphasizes on having this session in ASPICON with the aim of encouraging all the INIs and help them learn from experiences of each other in their fight against the AMR. In this session there were representatives from AIIMS Bhopal, AIIMS Rishikesh, AIIMS Mangalagiri, AIIMS Bhubhaneshwar, AIIMS Jodhpur, AIIMS Patna, and AIIMS Raipur, who shared their institutional experiences of AMSP.

The scientific session for this day began by a talk by Dr Divyashree S, infectious diseases consultant, MGM new Bombay hospital, which was concerned with incorporation of PK/PD principles into daily prescribing. Dr Divyashree was able to convey a complex topic in very simple language with appropriate case scenarios.

The next session was by Dr V Balaji , The Hilda Lazarus core research chair, CMC Vellore, which was online and he elaborated on the newer drugs available for the Multidrug resistance organisms and their importance in Indian ICUs.

The next talk of this scientific session was taken by Prof.Dr Sanjeev Singh, Professor and Hospital administration Medical Director, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Faridabad

where he from his vast experience shared the idea of decentralising AMSP from tertiary care to primary healthcare.

The last session of the conference was taken by Prof.Dr Rakesh Lodha, Professor of Paediatrics, AIIMS New Delhi where he introduced a new frontier of paediatric antimicrobial stewardship, and discussed about the measures implemented in his institute and what steps can be taken to enhance this frontier.

The final task at hand was the conduction of the National AMSP quiz where 8 teams comprising of three participants (all from different disciplines like- Medicine, Microbiology, Pharmacology etc) took part. These teams were selected from number of teams from the various institutes from all across the country via a screening round, which was conducted simultaneously at all the centres. The quiz masters for final round were Dr Sagar Khadanga, and Dr Binod Kumar Patil. After the successful completion of all the scientific sessions and competition the conference was concluded with a valedictory ceremony.

ASPICON 2022 was a resounding success which was made possible by the tireless work of the organising committee. This academic fiesta ended with these probable outcomes and conclusions:

- The Conference and its proceedings are a step towards making those involved and present more receptive towards antimicrobial stewardship programme which needs to be jolted out of its regressive mindsets.
- The conference was highly applauded for bringing together great minds from different fraternities, experts in their own fields who enlightened the audience about the practicality of implementation of AMSP. Their views and discussions made the audience see how AMSP can be implemented and the various low hanging fruits which can be targeted in the beginning and how antibiotic use can be rationalized through active questioning and multidisciplinary participation.

