



World Alzheimer's Day

On September 21st, 2023, World Alzheimer's Day In Bengaluru, to start with a milestone success was achieved when the Health Minister of Karnataka, Shri Gundu Rao announced Dementia as a Health Priority on the World Alzheimer's day. DIA along with NIMHANS and Government of Karnataka have worked out a draft action plan for approval and implementation. This event was held at the convention hall at NIMHANS. The event was organised by DIA along with NIMHANS' team and was held at NIMHANS convention centre and was well represented by Government officials, NIMHANS' team of doctors, medical students, and elders from Nightingales Medical Trust's Sandhya Suraksha, DIA's team and Media.

The Karnataka State Government's commitment to address dementia as a public health priority was a unique and forward-thinking initiative that will significantly improve the quality of life for the growing number of individuals living with dementia and their families in the state. Health Minister Announced Dementia as Public Health Priority for Karnataka. On the occasion of World Alzheimer's Day 2023, the Honourable Health Minister Sri Dinesh Gundu Rao announced Dementia as a public health priority for Karnataka. This declaration aligned with the submission of the Draft Karnataka State Dementia Action Plan, by the Director NIMHANS, Dr Pratima Murthy and Dementia India Alliance to the Govt of Karnataka.

Dementia, characterized by progressive memory loss, communication difficulties, impaired judgment, and behavioural changes, poses significant challenges to affected individuals and their families. It also carries substantial psychological, social, and economic costs for society as a whole. The estimated dementia prevalence for people above the age of 60 is 7.4%, with nearly 90 lac Indians currently living with dementia. By 2036, the number of individuals with dementia will rise to 1.7 Cr. Less than 10% of dementia cases in India are currently diagnosed and treated. With over 5 lakh individuals currently living with dementia in the state, a number expected to double by 2036, there is an urgent need for action. It is a growing public health concern, and under the leadership of Hon'ble Health Minister Sri Dinesh Gundu Rao, the Department of Health and Family Welfare in Karnataka, has taken leadership to address this issue.

Dr Radha Murthy President DIA recounted difficult experiences of patients with dementia and also the huge stress on families and caregivers. "The Dementia India Alliance was formed by connecting and empowering individuals, organisations to support dementia" said Dr Radha Murthy.

Wg Cdr D.P. Sabharwal, a caregiver of person with dementia, highlighted the urgent need to support family caregivers and foster a dementia-inclusive society.

Prof. Pratima Murthy Director NIMHANS submitted the Draft Dementia Action Plan developed as a consultative process involving organizations and more than individuals to the Honourable Health Minister. Elaborating the action plan, Dr Pratima Murthy emphasised the importance of caring for

people who cared for us. The draft aligns with the WHO Dementia action plan and is an evidence-based comprehensive actionable document.

The Honourable Health Minister addressed following the Declaration of Dementia as a Public Health Priority for Karnataka said that “Dementia will be the focus for the State”. With the rising numbers, the Hon’ble Minister emphasised the need to start working immediately and preparing Programs, Institutions and Society to support dementia. He recognised that empathy and financial support for caregivers will be required to ease their burden. In order to diagnose dementia at the door step, Sri Gundu Rao highlighted that screening for dementia and care provision could be provided through the Gruha Arogya program of the State Health Dept. Risk reduction and training of caregivers and creating livelihoods through caregiving needs to be strengthened in existing programs. Society has to come together to create awareness and creating dementia friendly public spaces is crucial he reiterated. Remaining mentally active is the way forward for all older people to reduce risk of dementia and ensure healthy ageing. Sr Dinesh Gundu Rao said that implementation of dementia care in the state of Karnataka can be a model for the whole country.

The Health Commissioner Sri Randeep D graced the occasion. Deans of Behavioural and Neurosciences NIMHANS were also present. Vote of Thanks was delivered by Prof BS Shankaranarayana Rao. The highlight of the event was the participation of persons living with dementia and their caregivers and all stakeholders, in a Drum jam session. All stakeholders involved in dementia care were also present at the event. These included representative from senior citizen associations, dementia champions from Urban society Jayanagar, Rotary, Senior Citizen society Bengaluru, Karnataka, Rotary, Primary Health Care doctors, Community Health Officers, students and faculty of NIMHANS among others.

Various exhibitions stalls organized by the Departments of Cognitive Neurology, Geriatric Psychiatry; Dementia India Alliance, Karnataka Brain Health Initiative, India ENIGMA initiative, YANTRA Program stall, Centre for Brain and Mind, Nightingales Medical trust, Technology solutions, NAMAN presented their solutions for dementia.





