

69th Annual National Conference – IPHACON2025

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The 69th Annual Conference of the Indian Public Health Association (IPHA) was successfully held from 21st to 23rd March 2025 at the KLE Convention Centre, Belagavi. Hosted by the Karnataka State Branch of IPHA and the Department of Public Health, JNMC (KAHER). The



event welcomed nearly 700-plus delegates from across India and abroad. The theme, ‘Transforming Public Health in India: Innovations, Challenges, Diplomacy, and Future Horizons’ set the tone for an event that was rich in dialogue, learning, and collaboration aimed at building a resilient and inclusive health system.

A Powerful Prelude: Insights from the Pre-Conference Workshops

Preceding the main conference, eleven Pre-Conference Workshops were held on 20th March in collaboration with national and international organizations such as WHO, ICMR, Cochrane, NIHF, and Umeå University.

Empowering public health actors to make informed decisions on engaging the Private Sector for NCD prevention and control: A practical workshop using applied tools: Organized by WHO, this session addressed lifestyle-based NCD prevention and the role of the private sector. It introduced tools to evaluate corporate involvement, discussed legal and marketing dynamics, and highlighted WHO’s influence in shaping global health policy. Medical Officers from the Government of Karnataka were specially deputed to attend this workshop. Dr. Angela De Silva, the Regional Advisor for Nutrition and Health Development at the WHO South East Asia Office in New Delhi, led this workshop.

Systematic Review: Organized by the India Cochrane team, this hands-on workshop trained

52 faculty members, significantly enhancing their capacity to conduct systematic reviews, led by Dr. Anju Sinha (Director ICMR -Cochrane) & her team had an overwhelming response.

Good Clinical Practice (GCP): Conducted in hybrid mode by NIHF in collaboration with KAHER, featuring experts from NIHF, CDSCO, and KAHER, this session was attended by 135 students and offered comprehensive training on ethical and regulatory aspects of clinical research. Dr. Ranjan Ranjan (HOD, Epidemiology, NIHF, New Delhi) himself looked into the smooth working of the workshop, and it was a smashing success.

Scoping Review: Led by Julia Schröders from Umeå University, Sweden, this workshop offered valuable insights into the methodology and application of scoping reviews. Participants explored its relevance to their research, gaining practical understanding and motivation to apply the approach in future studies.

Qualitative Comparative Analysis: The participants learnt to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the QCA methodology, plan a step-by-step QCA study design, and interpret the data coming from a QCA analysis. This workshop was curated by Dr. Miguel San Sebastian, Umeå University, Sweden

Expanding Horizons: Addressing GBV and Amplifying LGBTQIA++Voices: This workshop focused on integrating gender-based violence (GBV) response into routine healthcare through early identification, trauma-informed care, and system-level protocols. It also emphasized the need for LGBTQIA++ inclusive healthcare through SOGIESC sensitization, inclusive practices, and policy reforms to ensure equity and respectful care. This excellent workshop was sponsored and organized by SAATHI.

Health Insurance: Dr. Shruti Prabhu from Narayana Hrudayalaya Ltd, led a highly informative session demystifying complex insurance terminology. Through interactive discussions, participants gained clarity on coverage options, benefits, and the enrollment process.

Precision Perspectives: Mastering RCT Data Analysis Techniques: Led by Dr. Kapil Goel from PGIMER Chandigarh, this workshop provided hands-on training in advanced RCT analysis methods, including Repeated Measures ANOVA



and Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE). It emphasized practical application of the Intention-to-Treat (ITT) approach to improve the reliability of public health research findings.

Spatial and Survey Data Analysis Using GIS and R: This workshop provided hands-on training in using GIS and R for spatial and survey data analysis. Participants learned data-handling techniques and explored real-world public health applications of these tools. Col. Dr. Arun Kumar Yadav (Professor, AFMC Pune) and Dr. Biji Soman (AMCHSS, SCTIMIST, Trivandrum) headed this workshop.

Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS): This skill-based session, led by Dr. Abhijit S. Gogate (ACLS), and Dr. Anupama (BLS) included hands-on training and pre-/post-tests, equipping participants with essential emergency response skills. This session was conducted in the state-of-the-art skill lab at KAHER.

Cultural Competency in Public Health: As part of the Inclusive Bharat Collaborative with the Piramal Foundation, this unique pre-conference session highlighted culture as a vital determinant of health. Participants stressed the need for culturally sensitive training for Indian health professionals and appreciated the use of arts-based methods to deepen engagement and understanding.

**Inauguration Ceremony:
A Grand Commencement**



The Inauguration Ceremony, held on the morning of March 22nd, was an occasion marked by grandeur and distinction. The event was



graced by the Hon'ble Chief Guest, Prof. (Dr.) Nitin Gangane, Vice-Chancellor of KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research. He was joined by the esteemed Special Guest, Dr. Mary Spongberg, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University, Australia. Also present on the dais were Dr. Sanghmitra Ghosh President IPHA, Dr. Kaushik Mitra Secretary General IPHA, Dr. (Mrs.) N. S. Mahantashetti (Organizing Chairperson), Prof. (Dr.) Mubashir Angolkar (Organizing Secretary), and Dr. H. B. Rajasekhar, President of the IPHA Karnataka State Branch and Director of USM-KLE.

The ceremony featured the conferral of prestigious honors, including the Dr. I.C. Tiwari Lifetime Achievement Award, presented to Dr. M.K. Sudharshan, alongside Fellowships and



accolades recognizing academic excellence. The launch of the E-Souvenir and the 'Nourish' E-book added a commemorative dimension to the event. Notably, the PC Sen Best Paper Award was



conferred upon Dr. Ankit Chandra from AIIMS, New Delhi, in recognition of his outstanding research contribution.

As a tribute to India's cultural heritage, all tokens of appreciation presented to the dignitaries were exquisitely handcrafted in traditional Bidri art. Additionally, the IPHA Headquarters honoured Prof. (Dr.) Mubashir Angolkar, Organizing Secretary, with a distinguished memento crafted in the historic Chola art style, as a symbol of their gratitude. Following the vote of thanks, Prof. (Dr.) Mubashir Angolkar, Organizing Secretary, invited the entire Organizing Committee on the stage, for a picture.



Memorial Orations: Honouring Legacy, Inspiring the Future

The conference featured three eminent Memorial Orations. Dr. Prabhdeep Kaur (Chair & Professor, Isaac Centre for Public Health, IISc,



Bengaluru), delivering the Dr. B. C. Dasgupta Oration on 21st March 2025, emphasized the importance of evidence-based solutions in tackling non-communicable diseases. The session was chaired by Dr. Sanghmitra Ghosh, President, IPHA, and Dr. Pramod Samanta Ray Co-Principal Investigator, KIMS, KIIT University.

Dr. K. N. Rao Oration was delivered by Prof. (Dr.) Priya Abraham (Senior Professor, Department of Clinical Virology, CMC Vellore) on 22nd March 2025, stressing the urgency of HPV vaccination. This session was chaired by Dr.



Kaushik Mitra, Secretary General, IPHA, and Padma Shree Dr. Madan M. Godbole Distinguished Professor KAHER Belagavi.

The Dr. J. E. Park Oration, held on 23rd March 2025, was delivered by Dr. J. Ravi Kumar, (Head of the Department of Community Medicine at Dr. PSIMS&RF), and provided further academic depth, engaging the audience in vital discussions on public health practice. The session was chaired by Dr. Mausumi Basu, Professor & Head



of the Department of Community Medicine, IPGMER/SSKM, Kolkata, and Dr. Surajit Ghosh, President of the West Bengal Branch of IPHA.

Quiz:

The Professor Deoki Nandan Memorial Public Health Quiz drew participation and enthusiasm, with AFMC Pune emerging victorious in the finals.



Scientific Sessions:

Plenary Sessions: Seven Plenary sessions set the stage for impactful dialogue at the conference.

The session **“Strengthening Primary Health Care: Community Engagement, Digital Innovation, and Data-Driven Transformation”**, emphasized the role of community participation, technology integration, and data-driven approaches in enhancing primary health care. Speakers were Dr. J. N. Srivastava (NHSRC), Dr. G. B. Singh (NHSRC), and Air Cmdre (Dr.) Ranjan Kumar Choudhary (NHSRC), with the session chaired by Major General (Dr.) Atul Kotwal (NHSRC) and Dr. Dipika Sur (Former ICMR).



“Vaccinate, Screen, Treat: Pillars of Cervical Cancer Elimination”, highlighted a comprehensive approach to cervical cancer through early vaccination, screening, and treatment, along with implementation challenges and recent advancements. Dr. Rajesh Ranjan (NIHFW), Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed (JNMC), Dr. Anita



Dalal (JNMC), were the speakers. It was chaired by Dr. Muralidhar Tambe (BJ Medical College Pune), Dr. Chandra Metgud (JNMC), and Dr. Hitt Sharma (Serum Institute).

The plenary **“Cancer Registries in the Digital Age”** addressed AI’s role in data management, disparities in cancer data reporting, and registry strengthening. Speakers were Dr. Prashant Mathur (ICMR-NCDIR), Dr. Anita Nath (ICMR-NCDIR), and Dr. Rajaram Swaminathan (Cancer Institute (WIA), Chennai).



Chairs included Prof. (Dr.) Nitin Gangane (Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, KAHER, Belagavi), Dr. Prakash Doke (Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University Medical College Pune), and Prof. (Dr.) Anand Krishnan (AIIMS New Delhi).

On 22nd March, the panel discussion on **“Transforming Public Health Education in India”** focused on curriculum reform, competency-based learning, and academia-practice collaboration. Panellists included Dr.



Prabhdeep Kaur (Isaac Centre for Public Health, IISC Bengaluru), Dr. Tarun Bhatnagar (NIE Chennai), Dr. Prashant Bhatt (Govt. of Karnataka), Dr. Ravi A V (Resolve to Save Lives), Dr. Biju Soman (AMCHSS, SCTIMST Trivandrum),

Prof. (Dr.) Mubashir Angolkar (JNMC), and Dr. Arathi Rao (PSPH Manipal).

The session **“Migraine: Unmasking Migraine from Shadows to Spotlight”** emphasized the public health impact of migraine, advocating for better awareness, diagnosis, and care integration. Speakers were Dr. Naresh Sharma (CDSCO), Dr. Dheeraj Shah (NIHFW), Dr. Pooja Sharma (APAR Health), Dr. Shruti Atul



Prabhu (Narayana One Health), and Dr. Suryaprabha Turaga (NIMS Hyderabad), with moderation conducted by Dr. Bheemsain V. Tekkalaki(JNMC) and chaired by Dr. Dhruvajyoti Debnath (AIIMS Mangalagiri) and Dr. Somnath Naskar (IPGMER, SSKM).

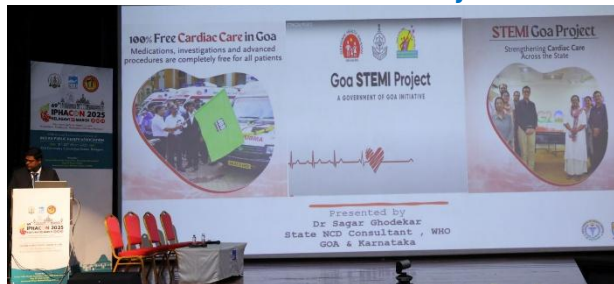
“AI in Healthcare: Innovation, Challenges, Diplomacy and Future Horizons.” featured Mr. Prashant Balraj (Wadhvani AI), Dr. Mohamed Adil (Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre), and Mr. Vijetha Shastry (Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre), discussing AI’s role in diagnostics. This forward-looking session delved into how artificial intelligence is transforming healthcare from tuberculosis detection to modernization of health data and entrepreneurial opportunities. The speakers emphasized the promise of technology balanced by the necessity for ethical governance.

“Silent Resolution in Menstrual Hygiene Management in Karnataka”, by Dr. Veena V. (Aarogya Soudha, Bengaluru) on which explored cultural barriers, policy gaps, and the need for sustained efforts to improve menstrual health, leaving a strong impact on the audience.

Parallel Sessions

“Comprehensive Sexuality Education” featured FOGSI, IAP, IIPH, WHO, and VMMC, focusing on adolescent health. **One Health and Environment and Health** emphasized cross-sector strategies for pandemic prevention. In **Human Behavioural Risks for Road Crashes** in Karnataka, Dr. Gautam Sukumar (NIMHANS) shared key behavioural insights and interventions. **Lifelong Impact of Paediatric HIV** presented ICMR findings, stressing integrated, age-sensitive care. **Influenza Vaccination Among Priority Groups** in India focused on improving vaccine uptake. **Closing the Inequities: A Deep Dive on Tribal Health**

explored community-led solutions in tribal areas. **Advancing Adult Immunization** highlighted the need for wider vaccine coverage in older adults. Dr. Sagar Ghodekar showcased coordinated cardiac care in the **WHO STEMI Project in Goa**.



Sessions on **“Mental Health Survey, and Comprehensive Health Care”** provided policy-focused insights. **One Health Session II** addressed AMR and global collaboration. The panel **Can Professional Midwifery Help Achieve SDG 3?** emphasized midwifery’s role in maternal and newborn health. A panel on the **“Public Health Impact of Venous Thromboembolism”**, featuring Dr. Mahadeva Swamy B.C. (Manipal Hospital-Goa), Dr. V. A. Kothiwale (JNMC), and Dr. Navin M. Mulimani(JNMC) covered clinical trends, public health implications, and prevention strategies. It was moderated by Dr. Parishwanath Patil (JNMC). The scientific sessions concluded with an **“Open House on NCDs”**, moderated by Dr. H. B. Rajasekhar (USM KLE IMP), offering an interactive platform for practitioners and citizens to share perspectives. Community-led solutions and state-level insights enriched the discussion.

Ideas Taking Flight: Free Poster and Oral Presentations

Over three dynamic days, 400+ oral and poster presentations reflected the richness of



India’s public health research. Faculty from premier institutions and passionate postgraduates & undergraduates fostered learning, dialogue, and collaboration. The conference, echoing the theme **“Transforming Public Health in India: Innovations, Challenges, Diplomacy, and Future Horizons,”** embodied the collective drive toward Viksit Bharat 2047 with health at its core.

Evenings of Celebration: Culture, Camaraderie, and Connections

The evenings were marked by spirited celebrations. On 21st March cultural programme featuring student performances added a festive flair, while the Grand Gala Dinner on the 22nd brought together delegates for an evening of camaraderie, live music, and culinary delights.

The conference concluded on a high note with the Valedictory Function, a fitting finale to IPHACON 2025. Awards for the best paper and poster presentations were distributed, recognizing the outstanding contributions of participants from across the country.

The event also reflected the conference's strong commitment to sustainability through several thoughtful "Go Green" initiatives. In a conscious effort to minimize environmental impact, traditional printed materials were

replaced with digital alternatives — e-poster presentations and the substitution of plastic banners with elegant digital displays throughout the venue. Additionally, delegates wore lanyards made from recycled paper, a simple yet powerful gesture toward ecological responsibility. These initiatives not only reduced the conference's carbon footprint but also set a benchmark for sustainable practices in future academic events.

The organizing efforts of KLE Academy of Higher Education and Research (KAHER) received well-deserved praise for the successful execution of IPHACON 2025. The team's vision, meticulous planning, and unwavering commitment to excellence were instrumental in delivering a conference that was not only impactful and academically enriching but also future-forward in its approach.

