



Reaching Out to them
... Together
E-Newsletter

PALLIUM INDIA
CARE BEYOND CURE

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Dear friends

“Every day life gives us innumerable chances to open our hearts, if we can only take them. An old woman passes you with a sad and lonely face, swollen veins in her legs, and two heavy plastic bags full of shopping she can hardly carry; a shabbily dressed old man shuffles in front of you in line at the post office; a boy on crutches looks harried and anxious as he tries to cross the street in the afternoon traffic; a dog lies bleeding to death on the road; a young girl sits alone sobbing hysterically in the subway.

Any one of these sights could open the eyes of your heart to the fact of vast suffering in the world. Let it. Don't waste the love and grief it arouses; in the moment you feel compassion welling up in you, don't brush it aside, don't shrug it off and try to return to 'normal', don't be afraid of your feeling or embarrassed by it, or allow yourself to be distracted from it, or let it run aground in apathy. Be vulnerable.....” (Sogyal Rinpoche; Tibetan Book of Living and Dying; 1992; Rupa & Co, Calcutta. P 199).

It is this acceptance of *vulnerability* that helped the Indian palliative care movement to manifest as the Shanti Avedna Ashram in Mumbai in 1986, as the home-based palliative care movement in Kerala in 1993 and numerous others that sprang up in the last 15 years. Why do we mention this here? Perhaps we are just trying to remind ourselves: we should not permit the *growth* and *routinization* of palliative care to take away its soul. It will be a happy day when palliative care reaches most of the needy in the country; but it will be a sad, sad day, if in the process palliative care comes to be delivered just with the brain, and the “eyes of the heart” do not open any more!

Well done and thank you, Diederik Lohman and colleagues!

“Human Rights Watch” has come out with a 47 page report – in good time for possible consideration by the U.N General Assembly’s special session on Drugs which is scheduled to start on 11 March 2009.

Please see the following quote from the report:

Many people interviewed by Human Rights Watch who had experienced severe pain in India, expressed the exact same sentiment as torture survivors: all they wanted was for the pain to stop. Unable to sign a confession to make that happen, several people told us that they had wanted to commit suicide to end the pain, prayed to be taken away, or told doctors or relatives that they wanted to die.

Law makers, Policy makers, Health care administrators, Doctors, Nurses, please listen to what Human Rights Watch is proclaiming: By not relieving pain and suffering, we are subjecting our people to torture!

To view the report, please go to <http://hrw.org/en/node/81080/>

And thank you, Mrs Jagjit Pavadia, Narcotics Commissioner of India.

Well, we ARE getting more and more support. The Central Bureau of Narcotics of India – the most important agency involved in control of “narcotic” drugs in the country, has published a desk diary. Guess what they have printed on it for a motto? It says, “OPIUM FOR PAIN AND PALLIATIVE CARE”! Thank you, Mrs Pavadia. With this sort of support from people like you, we all feel so strong!

A lot of people will pray for Sue Treadwell’s soul!

Miss Sue Treadwell was a beautiful young philanthropist from UK whom the world so sadly lost to cancer recently. Her parents have instituted a fund which now helps us to bring badly needed treatment for several people who could not have afforded it. We thank Sue’s parents and want them to know how we share their grief and how we admire what their daughter did in her life-time. Some day, when they feel up to talking about Sue, we shall share it with you all.

Liliana’s visit:

Liliana De Lima, the executive director of the International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care (IAHPC), visited India and spent several days studying the palliative care scene. In an interview with “The Indian Express” (03 March 2009) she talked about her experience at

the age of 12. Caring for her grandmother guided her to the palliative care path in later life. Liliana said she found a few things particularly touching in Kerala – the cleanliness in people's homes and villages, the bright faces of children going to school and the dignity of the people even in the face of disease and suffering.

If you live in Kerala, do watch the television channel "ACV" for an interview with Liliana at 10 PM on Saturday, the 7th of March.

International Conference of Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPC)

In February 2008, when Dr Biju Raghavan and team organized the annual conference of IAPC at Kochi, it was generally proclaimed the best IAPC conference ever. Well, this time Dr Sushma Bhatnagar seems to have outdone Kochi. The XVI International Conference was held at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. It was so well-organized that the general feeling was that Sushma has made things very difficult indeed for future conference organizers!

Dr T Mohanasundaram will be organizing the XVII International Conference of IAPC at Trichy, Tamilnadu on the **12th – 14th of February 2010** (with pre-conference workshops on the 11th February). Register this month itself to avail of the Early Bird offer of reduced registration fee. Dr Mohansundaram can be contacted at mohan.sudharsana@gmail.com. He informs that the conference website will be ready by next week – look out for www.palcontrichy.com

Bursaries available: conference at Perth, Australia.

Asia Pacific Hospice Network (APHN) and Palliative Care Australia are having a joint conference from the 24th to 27th of September 2009 at Perth, Western Australia. Some bursaries are available for those seeking support to attend the conference from developing countries; but applications for this purpose must be submitted this month itself. Please visit www.conlog.com.au/palliativecare2009

Residential fellowship in palliative care at CMC, Vellore.

It is time to apply for this year's one year residential fellowship course in Palliative Care at Christian Medical College, Vellore, Tamilnadu. Fellows will be eligible for a monthly stipend and accommodation within the institution's premises. Minimum qualification: MBBS. For more information, please write to edupall@gmail.com

New premises and inpatient facility for TIPS.

Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences (TIPS) has just moved into more spacious premises. The address is II Floor, S.U.T Specialty Hospital, Plamoodu, Pattom, Trivandrum 695004. The big news is that we are starting an inpatient facility in the new premises next week. Do wish us well.

Contact details for TIPS remain unchanged; you can view them at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you for saying we were missed!

This edition of e-news was delayed. We apologise for the delay, but are happy to see that we were missed! Uma Vishnu, a journalist from Delhi wrote to say, "Haven't been seeing Pallium India's newsletters. I looked up the website too. Hope everything's fine. Looking forward to hearing from u"

Thank you, Uma. We are really glad to see that you read us!

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