Indian Association for Medical Informatics IAMI

IAMI - Its History, Formation, Objectives & Activities

The formation of IAMI was conceptualized by Prof (Dr) Nanduri Gajanana Rao, B.Sc; M.B; B.S; Ph. D. (Computer Aided Medicine), the then Senior Executive Medical Officer, Indian Armed Forces Medical Services, after attending world congresses on Computer applications in Medicine organized by IFIP and IMIA (International Medical Informatics Association) at Amsterdam in 1983, at Washington in 1986 and at Singapore in 1989 and after meeting many stalwarts in medical informatics from different countries. It took him many years to get the necessary support from others and bring together few like minded people to give it a shape, draft the aims, objectives, constitution and bylaws for the association before registering it as a non-profit making professional body in September 1993 with its Registered Office at Hyderabad in the Department of Clinical Pharmacology, Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS). Besides Dr NG Rao, the founder members included Dr R. D. Lele, Professor of Nuclear Medicine and the then Director, Jaslok Hospital, Bombay, Dr N.Suresh Shinde, Consultant Physician, Pune, Mr D. Subba Rao, Head, Computer Section, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, Mr RVSS Avadhanulu, Deputy Director, Computer Division, NIMS, Hyderabad, Colonel K. Bhaskara Reddy, General Manager, Medinova Diagnostics, Hyderabad, Prof (Dr) MUR Naidu, Professor and Head, Dept of Clinical Pharmacology, NIMS, Colonel T. Dayakar, Medical Suptdt, NIMS, Dr SM Karandikar, Consultant, Pharmacologist, Pune, Colonel A. Nagendra, Department of Microbiology, Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, Dr GR Sridhar, Endocrinologist, Visakha Patnam, Mr AK Tiwari, Scientist, Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), Hyderabad, Dr Ramji Naraian, Jaipur, Prof SK Guha, Center for Biomedical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology and All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi, Dr Lazar Mathew, Director, Defense Bioengineering Labs, DRDO, Bangalore, Dr Kakarla Subba Rao, Director, NIMS, Hyderabad and few more.

Dr RD Lele gave his consent to be the first President (Honorary), Prof (Dr) NG Rao became the first Vice President, Mr D Subba Rao, Head, Computer Section, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, agreed to be the First Secretary and Mr RVSS Avadhanulu, Dy Director, Computer Division, NIMS, Hyderabad, took the financial control as its First Treasurer. Many experts gave their consent to be part of the Executive Committee of IAMI. The name approved by the majority of the founder members was "Indian Association for Medical Informatics" in short, -I.A.M.I.- to match with similar associations of other countries. The logo designed by Colonel K. Bhaskara Reddy (General Manager, Medinova Diagnostics, Hyderabad) was adopted and continues till this day.

Since, its inception, all the Founder Members of IAMI very enthusiastically carried out the membership drive and they were successful in organizing the first conference, IAMI-95 at Hyderabad in Hotel Golconda under the Chairmanship of Prof NG Rao, who was then, Honorary Professor and Consultant, Computer aided Medicine at NIMS, Hyderabad in collaboration with NIMS and DRDO, Hyderabad. It had 120 participating members presenting about 60 scientific and business papers. Many hospitals, medical institutes, research organizations, computer firms, computer dealers and large establishments with own hospitals like Armed Forces Medical Services, DRDO, BHEL, Osmania University, Central University, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology, etc participated in the conference.

The first General Body Meeting held during IAMI-95, attested the decision of the executive committee for electing Dr RD Lele, Bombay as the first President of IAMI (Honorary), Prof NG Rao, as the Vice
President, Mr D. Subba Rao as the Secretary and RVSS Avadhanulu as the Treasurer. It also decided to hold the conferences of the association only once every two years in view of the fact that conduction of a conference at national level requires an enormous effort in terms of time and money and there would not be much of a change or improvement in the subjects for presentation in the conference every year. It was further decided to hold workshops and seminars in the alternate years to ensure continuity of the activities of the association for stimulating interest in the younger generation of medical doctors and computer engineers in this emerging field of computer assisted healthcare and drawing their attention for short and long term studies in medical informatics. It was also decided to hold the conferences in different states of the country every time to create awareness on computer applications in Medicine, health and allied fields in new places throughout the country.

IAMI made a tie-up with Medinova Diagnostics, Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Osmania Medical College, Gandhi Medical College and University of Hyderabad (Central University) and conducted many short term and long term beginners' courses for doctors, nurses, dentists, paramedical personnel and computer professionals interested in HIS and other computer applications in medicine. The association was successful in enrolling many hospitals, institutes and organizations as Institutional Life Members that included many prestigious medical institutes and in enrolling a number of non-resident Indians as life members of the association. Prof NG Rao took initiative and encouraged the formation of Indian Confederation for Healthcare Accreditation, at New Delhi and made IAMI as one of its member organizations. Action was also initiated to include Medical Informatics as one of the elective subjects in the UG curriculum for all medical colleges in India and to get academic credits from IMA for all the delegates participating in the conferences, seminars and workshops organized by the association.

Dr Lazar Mathew, the then Director of DEBEL, Bangalore, organized the second conference, IAMI-1997, in Bangalore at the Indian Institute of Science, with full support by Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and the IISc. More than 200 delegates attended it and many software and hardware firms participated in it by giving demonstrations of their products. The General Body Meeting of IAMI held on this occasion elected Prof. N. G. Rao as the next President, Mr RVSS Avadhanulu, Dy Director, Computer Facility, NIMS, Hyderabad as the Secretary and Dr K. Bhaskara Reddy, General Manager, Medinova Diagnostics, as the treasurer. Dr Lazar Mathew also brought out an elaborate cornucopia of the proceedings of the conference.

The third conference IAMI-1999 was to be held in Madras but this had to be postponed due to natural calamities in that city and shortage of time to change the venue. A major workshop was held in lieu of this conference in Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad.

IAMI-2001, the third All India Conference on Medical Informatics, was very successfully conducted at YMCA Hall, Parliament Street, New Delhi, by Mr. Atul Bal and Dr Ajay Bal of Protech Ltd, New Delhi, Dr. Naval Kishore of Tendercare, New Delhi and many other doctors from both Private and Public Hospitals in Delhi. The General Body Meeting held in IAMI-2001 re-elected Prof N. G. Rao as the President for one more term.

The President authorized Dr. Sanjay Bedi to start an on-line news letter of IAMI through iami@yahoogroups.com for dissemination and discussion on various matters pertaining to medical informatics and the association. This has now grown as the de facto information source for medical informatics related activities in India and abroad and another group for only the Executive Committee Members of IAMI for conveying important announcements, to conduct on-line meetings,
discussions and voting on urgent decisions and resolutions. Its active members include almost the entire Who's Who of medical informatics in India.

A long felt need of IAMI members to have its own web site was fulfilled in the year 2002 when the then President, Prof. N. G. Rao designed the site and contents. Dr. O. P. Sharma, one of the life members of IAMI and the then Director of IndMedica Ltd., Chandigarh, agreed to create the official web site, [www.iamindia.org](http://www.iamindia.org) (recently changed to [www.iami.org.in](http://www.iami.org.in)), and maintain it at a subsidized rate.

The fourth conference, IAMI-2003, was held at Post Graduate Institute of Medical research, Chandigarh. Drs. O. P. Sharma and A. K. Attri, in collaboration with the PGI and the local branch of IMA, organized this in an excellent and enviable manner with a large number of delegates. The conference was preceded by a pre-conference workshop on computer use by medical professionals. A large number of sponsors, advertisers and exhibitors took part in the conference and many fresh delegates joined the IAMI making it a very successful event. In the General Body Meeting of IAMI held on this occasion, Dr OP Sharma, Opthalmologist and the then Director of IndMedica Ltd, was elected as the next President, Dr AK Attri, Professor of General Surgery, Chandigarh as the Secretary and Dr SB Bhattacharyya, Consultant, Healthcare Services, Satyam Computer Services, Hyderabad, as the Treasurer.

Dr. S. Sanyal, Vice President IAMI, CMO, Indian Railways, Kolkata, organized a mid-conference in Kolkata (Midcon-2004) in the South-Eastern Railways Hospital in Kolkata in May 2004. This conference saw an entire session dedicated solely to providing tele-bridges to various centers across the globe for providing telemedicine services. Two prestigious hospitals of India were linked up to the conference venue and live demonstration of few seriously ill patients being treated by them was carried out in a very efficient and cost effective manner.

The desire of the Founder, Dr NG Rao to start a regular and on-line journal of the association, Indian Journal of Medical Informatics was fulfilled when Dr Sanjay Bedi, Asst Professor of Pathology, Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Amritsar, was appointed Editor-in-Chief with Dr. S N Sarbadhikari as Associate Editor and Dr. Satish Kumar and Mr. Vinay Pande as Assistant Editors. This effort culminated in the publication of both the on-line and hard copy versions of Indian Journal of Medical Informatics (IJMI). The first edition of the journal was released during Midcon-2004 at Kolkata. Dr Sanjay Bedi was successful in getting the IJMI indexed (ISSN number 0973-0379). Two further issues were brought out in December 2004 and October 2005. The editorial board intends to publish IJMI regularly every quarter.

The fifth conference, IAMI-2005, was held at Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences, Amritsar under the able chairmanship of Dr Sanjay Bedi, Department of Pathology. It was a great success with live telemedicine sessions and videoconferencing sessions arranged by the Vice President, Dr SB Gogia, General and Plastic Surgeon, New Delhi and Mr Jai Ganesh, System Analyst, Sri Satya Sai Institute of Medical Sciences, Puttaparthi, AP. Dr NG Rao, Dr BC Harinath, Director, JBTDC, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sewagram and Dr GDD Mogli, Director, Dr Mogli IT Ltd, Visakhapatnam have been appointed as Advisors by the General Body. Around 275 registered delegates and 150 student delegates participated from all over India. Many organizations and software companies participated in demo sessions and put up exhibits of the products developed by them. The October 2005 issue of IJMI and the second edition of the book
“Computer Applications in Medicine” written by Dr. R. D. Lele, the first President of IAMI, were released during the conference.

This conference too was preceded by a daylong CME tutorials on Basics of Computers for students and Linux/Open Source OS for the attending delegates. The sixth biennial conference, IAMI-2007 is scheduled to be held in the Centre for Digital Health, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre, Kochi, Kerala in November 2007 as proposed by Dr. S. N. Sarbadhikari. The association is expecting participation of eminent people in medical informatics from all over the world.

Besides these biennial conferences, many workshops, seminars, symposia and mid-conferences were held in different places all over the country from 1995 to 2006. Many other societies and associations too conducted their own conferences, seminars and symposia in collaboration with IAMI.

The total membership stands approximately about 500 at present with 10 Institutional Members, which include the premier medical institute of India, The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, The Postgraduate Institute for Medical Research, Chandigarh, Nizams Institute of Medical sciences, Hyderabad, SGPG Institute, Lucknow, Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Amritsar, MNJ Institute of Oncology, Hyderabad, etc.

A number of IAMI members are on several advisory and taskforce groups for telemedicine and e-Health projects in Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Department of Information Technology, Government of India. Recently, the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) honored IAMI by formally inviting five of its members to its conference scheduled for late August 2006 in New Delhi.

With the current membership of 500 (approximately) from all over the country as well as from some of the large institutes and organizations in other countries, whose experiences range from those in the medical and allied fields to the fields of software and hardware engineering, the association feels proud to be the true representative of our country in all fields of medical informatics.