

ADOLESCENT PAEDIATRICS IN INDIA

India is a large diverse country with a 5000 year old civilization with 325 spoken languages and 1652 dialects. The current population of India is reported to be 1.32 billion and has the world highest youth population (10-24 years old) of 356 million. The adolescent population is estimated to be 280 million. Health status in India has been gradually improving over the years and some of the states like Kerala have health indices as good as many of the developed countries. Adolescents, like in most developing countries, were in no-men land with Paediatricians allowed to cater to children only till the age of 12.



The concept of Adolescent health as a specialty was first established in 1999 in one of the conferences organised in the city of Cochin, in the state of Kerala. And Adolescent health care was declared in the year 2000 by the then Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) National President Dr. Swathi Y. Bhave. A post-graduate diploma course (PGDAP) was started in 2004 by the Centre for Child Development (CDC) Trivandrum, under the Kerala University during the National IAP Presidentship of Dr.M.K.C.Nair.

Till that time all children above 12 were under the care of adult physicians and were in a twilight zone. With the formation of the Adolescent Health Academy (AHA) and the diploma course, Pediatricians were sensitized and empowered to manage adolescents and deal with their problems. An Adolescent Orientation programme was organized in Delhi in 2005 and the first textbook of Adolescent Medicine was released in the year 2006, edited by Dr. Swati Bhaye.

The subsequent years saw the IAP National Presidents take a keen interest in the development of Adolescent Pediatrics. An Adolescent Friendly School Initiative (AFSI) was started by Dr. Naveen Thacker, the IAP National President of 2007; a module on the approach to 'Adolescents in Office Practice' was released by Dr. C.P. Bansal in 2011 who was the National Chairperson of AHA in the year 2010-2011, an approach to 'Difficult Adolescents in Office Practice' was formulated by Dr. Rohit Agrawal, IAP President 2012.

2013 saw the launch of a unique training programme at the National level during the term of IAP National President Dr. C.P.Bansal. Mission Kishore Udhay, popularly known as MKU, was a programme to propagate and educate all people dealing with Adolescents. National Training of Trainers was conducted and Paediatricians were trained to take classes for students, parents, teachers and other doctors. Dr. JS Tuteja, Dr. Preeti Galagal and Dr. Atul Kanitkar were the people instrumental in making it possible. The programme became so popular that it was continued all over the country in the years 2013, 14 & 15. This year 2016 IAP National President Dr. Pramod Jog and AHA National Chairperson Dr. Shaji Thomas John plan to bring out a new version of MKU with an idea to update all Paediatricians.



The Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP) has a membership strength of more than 22,000 and the Adolescent Health Academy (AHA) has a membership of more than 1600 members. Regular National Conferences are held since its inception and branch and state level conferences and Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes are organised regularly. With the combined efforts of IAP and AHA the adolescents in India will continue to get the benefits of better health services and management of their problems.

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