

April – June 2021

Issue - 2



# Epilepsy India



Newsletter of the Indian Epilepsy Association & Indian Epilepsy Society



## IEA

Indian Epilepsy Association



th

Anniversary

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Dr Atma Ram Bansal





Dr. Bindu Menon

Dear Friends

Hope you all are keeping safe !

COVID 19 pandemic has been with us for more than a year now. One of the novel ways to stop this is by 'vaccination' as a preventive measure. We should consider ourselves as very fortunate due to the rapid advancement in research in the field of vaccines and these have reached us with a lightning speed! Therefore, getting vaccinated should be a priority and should be considered essential by each one of us to play safe and contribute effectively in aborting this pandemic. However, vaccine hesitancy seems to be a hurdle among the public due to incomplete information and therefore there is a need to be educated with appropriate information regarding benefits of vaccination. In this context Dr. Satishchandra and Dr Rashmi, have presented relevant and precise information through frequently asked questions [FAQs] about the Covid vaccine and we thank them for the same. Further, the readers are humbly requested to keep themselves updated about the latest and new information on vaccine, as and when available which is the need of the hour! Meanwhile, a special mention on the reports that we continue to receive on the epilepsy awareness programs from various chapters across with the same zeal and vigor that are conducted using online systems like electronic/digital media as the new normal. Ms.Carol D Souza, has shared a very encouraging summary of how the 'Samman Association', Mumbai, continued their outreach education programs on epilepsy on the public domain despite the pandemic! Well done team and we acknowledge such dedicated efforts and hope the other chapters will also follow this trend. The Kochi and Nellore Chapters, have also shared events of the epilepsy day celebration.

We have exciting information for you all that the Indian Epilepsy Association [IEA], completes its 50-years of existence and will be eager to celebrate the 'GOLDEN Jubilee'! This is a proud and happy moment for all of us. In this connection, would like to inform you that the association has grown extensively in its scientific and academic activities, during the time as well as in its strength with more number of members joining us. As a mark of this we collectively appreciate the efforts of all its members for their support and encouragement and the IEA Governing Council invites proposals from each one of our members for the year long celebrations to make this important mile stone a memorable one!

The 13th Asian & Oceanian Epilepsy Congress [AOEC] was conducted virtually between 10-13 June, FUKUOKA, Japan, 2021. Several of our members participated in a variety of scientific sessions. We are extremely delighted to share that two of our members received awards in this virtual conference. We congratulate the recipients - Dr. K. P. Vinayan for the ILAE Asia Oceania outstanding achievement award 2021 and Dr. Kavita Srivastava for the Tadokoro Award. This is indeed an achievement and a proud moment for all of us!

Incidentally, it is a sad moment for all of us as we deeply mourn the loss of Dr. Ashok Panagariya, a pioneering legend in Neurology and will always be remembered for his invaluable contributions to Neurology. He was the recipient of Padma Shri and Dr. B.C Roy awards, among many other awards. We pray God for his soul to rest in peace and for his bereaved family to give them strength.

We would like to welcome and congratulate the new team of office bearers of Indian Epilepsy Association [IEA] and Indian Epilepsy Society [IES], who have taken over the positions from April 2021 and look forward to working with them for further academic and scientific growth.

Lastly, the editorial team wishes to thank the association for giving yet another opportunity to us to continue on editorial board for another term. Needless to say, we will for sure encourage every member to work for the cause of epilepsy and request once again to kindly mail your activities to [neurology.nellore@gmail.com](mailto:neurology.nellore@gmail.com).

Stay Healthy & Stay Safe!



Dr. Chanda Kulkarni



# COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH EPILEPSY

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by

**Dr. Rashmi D & Prof. P. Satishchandra**

Apollo Specialty Hospital, Jayanagar, Bangalore

### Introduction

The world is witnessing a pandemic of unprecedented nature since Dec 2019. The COVID-19 virus has spread across the globe and infected millions of people, bringing down the healthcare systems of several countries both developed and LMIC. The scientists all over the globe have worked very hard to produce vaccines in record time of less than a year, many of which would have normally taken more than a decade to enter into the market. The first mass vaccination program started in December 2020 according to WHO(World Health Organization).

There are number of doubts arising in the minds of the people regarding these vaccines. How safe are these vaccines? What are its side effects? What is its efficacy? Which vaccine to take?

This is a brief write up to address few of the questions.

#### A. Vaccine-General information

##### 1. What is vaccination and how do vaccines work?

Vaccination is a safe and effective method of protecting people against harmful disease even before they come in contact with the organisms. It is a simple method which works by stimulating the body's natural defense mechanism to build specific resistance against a particular infection.

##### 2. COVID vaccines were developed in record time, are they safe?

The COVID vaccines are going through the same rigorous safety assessments as other vaccines. Advances in genetics allowed scientists to determine the genetic code of the COVID-19 virus very early, which was critical to make the messenger RNA for the vaccine. These vaccines have been carefully studied, and large numbers of volunteers who received the vaccines have been closely followed up for side effects. The data suggests that these vaccines are very safe.

##### 3. What are the vaccines available in the World?

WHO issued Emergency Use Listing for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, AstraZeneca / Oxford COVID-19 vaccine and Janssen produced COVID-19 vaccines as on April 2021.

##### 4. Which COVID-19 vaccines are licensed in India?

Two vaccines have been granted EUA (Emergency Use Authorisation) by the CDSCO (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation). The two vaccines are COVISHIELD (Astra-Zeneca's produced by Serum Institute of India) and COVAXIN (manufactured by Bharat Biotech Limited) as on April 2021.

# COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH EPILEPSY

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 5. Where can I get the vaccine?

The vaccine is available in both government and private hospitals, though the pricing is variable.

### 6. Is it mandatory to take vaccine?

Vaccination is voluntary. However, it is advisable to take the complete scheduled course as per the requirement of the vaccine to protect against the disease.

### 7. How effective is the COVID vaccine?

The data so far suggest that vaccines are at least 70 to 90% effective, 2-4 weeks after the second dose.

### 8. Can we change from one vaccine to another if we get to know that the other vaccine is more efficacious /or first vaccine is not available for the second dose?

It is advisable to complete the entire schedule of vaccination of one type only. The multiple COVID vaccines are not interchangeable as per the current knowledge.

### 9. What are the side effects of COVID vaccine?

Approximately 15% of persons developed local pain or swelling at the vaccine site which generally resolve in 24-48 hours. Approximately 50% of persons develop headache, chills, fatigue, muscle aches or fever that is also transient (lasts for a short time). This requires only symptomatic treatment such as Paracetamol/ or any simple pain-relieving drugs

### 10. Will vaccines provide long term protection?

The vaccines for Covid -19 infections have been developed only in the past few months, hence it is too early to know their duration of protection, Initial observation says that it is likely to protect for 6-12 months.

### 11. Are the vaccines protective in other COVID-19 virus strains?

COVID-19 vaccines are expected to provide at least some protection against new virus variants. There are other COVID-19 vaccines in the making to combat the new variants

### 12. What is the interval between the first and second dosage and why was it changed?

The interval between the two doses of vaccine varies according to the type of vaccine. According to the latest guidelines released on 12th May 2021 by the MoHFW, Government of India and in accordance with NEGVAC (National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19) the dosing interval for COVISHIELD has been revised to 12 to 16 weeks. The dosing interval for COVAXIN remains the same at 4 to 6 weeks. (Ref.1) As the vaccines were released in a short period of time, we continue to learn more about this. The first dose gives around 70 % protection with the second increasing it to around 90 %. No vaccine provides 100% protection against any disease.

### 13. Does the protection come immediately soon after I have been vaccinated?

The protection is definitely not instant after vaccination. It takes at least two weeks in younger people and three weeks in older people to have a good immunogenic response. There is a better antibody response after the second dose.

### 14. Should I get the vaccination despite having no co-morbidities (No other disease)?

COVID-19 vaccination is known to prevent / reduce the severity of the COVID illness. Since healthy individuals can also develop severe COVID infection, the vaccine should be taken by everyone.



15. What are the other advantages of COVID vaccination?

COVID vaccination will also help in preventing the spread of infection to those around you. Thus, reducing the risk to the vulnerable population (Elderly, People with other diseases like Diabetes, Hypertension).

16. I have COVID19 infection at present, can I take the vaccine?

Vaccination is not given during the acute infection; Vaccine is to be taken 3 months after the infection as per current recommendations as of May 2021. In case you get COVID infection after the first dose of the vaccine, then you need to wait for 3 months after the infection for the second dose. (Ref. 2)

17. I already had COVID-19 and recovered. Do I still need to get the vaccine?

The natural immunity after COVID-19 infection may not last very long. Hence the need for vaccination even after Covid infection.

18. What are the contra-indications for the vaccine?

Persons with history of:

- a. Anaphylactic or allergic reactions to a previous dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- b. Known immediate or delayed-onset anaphylaxis or allergic reaction to vaccines or injectable therapies, pharmaceutical products, food items etc.

19. What medications should be avoided before taking COVID-19 vaccine?

There is no need to discontinue any medications while receiving COVID vaccine except for anti-coagulants and dual anti-platelets which are relative contra-indications and can be stopped a day or two before vaccination according to ICMR. The same need to be discussed with the physician who has prescribed these medications regarding when to STOP and when to RESUME these medications.

(Ref. 3)

20. Is the vaccination contra-indicated in people with chronic illness?

Chronic illness of either neurological, cardiac, pulmonary, metabolic, renal, malignancies, etc is not contra-indications for vaccine. On the contrary the Vaccine prevents/reduces the severity of infection.

21. I am a pregnant woman with epilepsy, can I get vaccinated?

The current data is not sufficient to suggest the safety of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant or Lactating women.

22. I have child with epilepsy, can I vaccinate him/her?

Vaccines are tested in adults first and then tried on children. As of now, there are no COVID-19 vaccines recommended in children. In future this may be possible. We may need to wait for study results

### B. Vaccine in People living with Epilepsy

23. Is COVID-19 vaccine safe for people with epilepsy?

Based on the currently available information, the COVID-19 vaccine is found to be safe in people with epilepsy (PWE).

# COVID-19 VACCINATION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH EPILEPSY

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

24.Does the frequency of seizures increase after COVID-19 vaccination?

According to the current available world literature, there is no increase in seizure frequency, following COVID-19 vaccination

25.Are persons with epilepsy at risk of seizures secondary to post vaccination fever?

As with any vaccine, some people may develop fever which could lower their seizure threshold for the short term, and rarely could result in a break-through seizure. There is no evidence that vaccination results in worsening of the epilepsy.

26.Should we avoid Anti-epileptic drugs (AED) when taking the vaccine?

PWE should take their regular scheduled medications without any disruption.

27.Does AED or Epilepsy reduce the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines?

NO. It gives the same degree of protection in People with Epilepsy and in those who are taking AEDs.

28.Do I need to continue to mask and maintain social distance even after I get the vaccine?

Vaccination is like wearing a helmet while riding Two-wheeler. It protects/prevents head injury,that does not mean one can flout traffic rules and drive recklessly!!

Similarly, even after vaccination one has to follow basic principles of:3 W's – Wear a mask, Wash your hands and Watch your distance(Six feet).

As the COVID-19 pandemic surges all over the world and unfolds its destructive potential, one needs to do everything possible to put a stop on this pandemic. The common man has as much an important role to play as that of the healthcare providers, scientists, policy makers. Our health is in our hands. While we continue to learn more, one needs to do everything possible to STOP the spread of the virus and reduce the severity and mortality. Vaccination is an effective tool in this armamentarium against COVID-19.

**“GET VACCINATED, STAY SAFE”**

### References

1. Order dated on 13thMay 2021 by PIB,Delhi, Minister of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India.
2. Order dated on 19thMay 2021 by PIB, Minister of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India.
3. Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines on COVID vaccine website. May 2021



Reported by  
CAROL D' SOUZA

MUMBAI

The year 2020 began well for us – 60 Samman support group members enjoyed their annual Thanksgiving & New Year Party on 5th Jan. And on the 9th, we had our rural epilepsy clinic in Pen which we started way back in 2007. This was an emotional one as it was going to be our last in Pen and we had fortuitously prepared the patients for this in advance. On 15th Feb we had a Valentine's theme party with games, after a discussion on 'What love means to me & people who I love and why'. And on 7th March we had another on the topic 'Happiness is the Best Anticonvulsant'. At each monthly support group meeting we also celebrate the birthdays of the month.

Then the shocker! On the evening of 24 March 2020, the Government of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.38 billion population of India as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses and NGOs started closing and laying off staff.

## Support Group Meetings During the Pandemic

However, this did not stop Samman – we immediately shifted online with a birthday celebration for Dr. Pravina Shah on 6th April. On 14th April we had Therapist Desiree Punwani speak on Emotional Freedom Therapy. Carol D'Souza conducted spiritual growth training for a few key members of our group titled 'The Voice in My Head' which was held over 3 sessions on 29th April, 7th and 14th May. On 30th May, Desiree had another session with us on 'Forgiveness'.

To understand why we were able to increase our activities during the pandemic one needs to understand that Mumbai is one of the most populous cities in the world – having a density of 45000 people per sq.km. Moreover, vehicular density is 1900 per sq.km which leads to time consuming traffic jams. Online meetings meant that travel was no longer a problem, neither was area of residence. More importantly resistance to using online means of communication disappeared amongst our large population.

Dr. Urvashi Shah who has always wanted to conduct support group meetings with us but had time constraints, now committed to having many sessions. She used the acronym 'MAST LIFE' to talk on Medication, Memory, Acceptance, Adjustment, Stress, Treatment, Lifestyle, Inner Control, Family, Forgiveness and Empowerment which she covered over 10 sessions from June to October. Not only were these sessions well attended and appreciated but they were recorded and audios sent over WhatsApp so members could go over the same or listen to them if they had not attended.



From April 1, 2020 to March 31st 2021, we have had 26 support group meetings as follows!

| S.No. | Date        | Samman Support Group Meetings - April 2020 to March 2021                                     |
|-------|-------------|--|
| 1     | 6th April   | 'Dr. Pravina Shah's birthday celebration' Moderator Carol D'Souza                            |
| 2     | 14th April  | 'Emotional Freedom Therapy' by Desiree Punwani   |
| 3     | 30th May    | 'Forgiveness' by Desiree Punwani   |
| 4     | 14th June   | 'Medication' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 5     | 20th June   | 'Memory' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 6     | 26th June   | 'Acceptance' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 7     | 5th July    | 'Adjustment' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 8     | 8th July    | 'Marriage' - Moderator Carol D'Souza- Speakers All Participants                              |
| 9     | 12th July   | 'Stress' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 10    | 15th July   | 'Marriage of People with Epilepsy' session for Caregivers - Dr. Pravina Shah / Carol         |
| 11    | 19th July   | 'Treatments in Epilepsy' by Dr. Urvashi Shah   |
| 12    | 29th July   | 'Antakshri' Moderator Dr. Pravina Shah - a singing /games session                            |
| 13    | 30th July   | 'Getting to know each other' - our joys & difficulties' for PWE under 50 yrs                 |
| 14    | 2nd Aug     | 'Lifestyle' by Dr. Urvashi Shah  |
| 15    | 5th Aug     | 'Dealing with Conflicting Thoughts / Fear' - Carol D'Souza                                   |
| 16    | 16th Aug    | 'Inner Control' by Dr. Urvashi Shah  |
| 17    | 23rd Aug    | 'Inner Control: Meditation' by Dr. Urvashi Shah  |
| 18    | 6th Sept    | 'Who Am I & Forgiveness' Carol Dsouza & Dr. Urvashi Shah                                     |
| 19    | 13th Sept   | 'Family & Epilepsy' by Dr. Urvashi Shah  |
| 20    | 4th Oct     | 'Forgiveness & Empowerment' by Dr. Urvashi Shah  |
| 21    | 9th Nov     | 'Challenges I have Overcome' - Sharing & learning from each other Moderator Dr. Pravina Shah |
| 22    | 13th Dec    | 'Problems faced by PWE and ways to deal with them' Counsellor Carol & Yashoda                |
| 23    | 20th Dec    | 'Living in Flow' Carol D'Souza in conversation with Desiree Punwani                          |
| 24    | 30th Jan 21 | 'Sharing of Our Journey with Epilepsy' Moderator Dr. Pravina Shah                            |
| 25    | 14th Feb    | 'Love' Carol D'Souza interviewed by Ankush on various aspects of Love                        |
| 26    | 28th March  | 'EEG' by Nola Shah   |

## IIT TechFest & Samman Collaborate

November, epilepsy awareness month could not have gone better – Samman was approached by IIT Mumbai to collaborate with them to showcase epilepsy at their Techfest. On 1st November at the Techfest launch there were presentations by people from 2 epilepsy NGOs – one was Samman and the other Mar de Somnis in Spain – Dr. Urvashi Shah moderated the session and interviewed the speakers after which she interviewed actress Fatima Sana Shaikh who for the first time spoke publicly about her epilepsy.





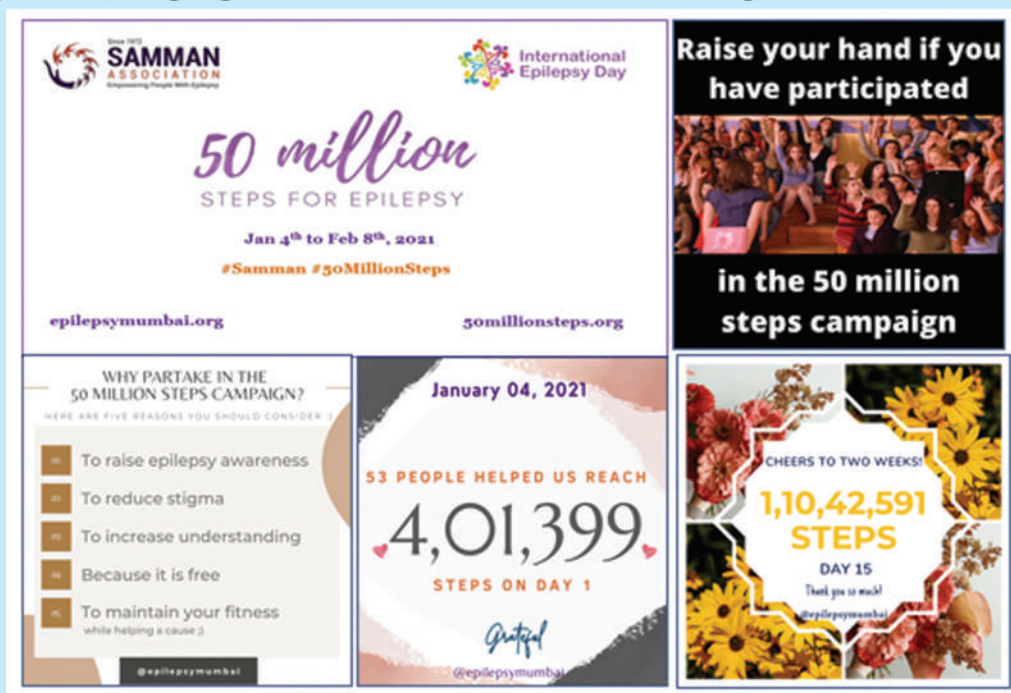
This was followed by the IIT Techfest HEAL (Help Epilepsy Awareness Last) initiative. IIT Mumbai got in touch with 40 schools / colleges nationally and Samman needed to arrange for 40 Neurologist to conduct online sessions. Samman appreciates the enthusiastic response received from the team of All India Neurologists to conduct these sessions on 8th Nov 2020.

### Epilepsy Education for the 10,000 BMC Teachers

In December, Pediatric Neurologist Dr. PradnyaGadgil approached the BMC with a proposal to epilepsy educate the BMC school Principals and Teachers. This they readily agreed to and we started with sessions on 4th& 18th December for their Principals. We created google forms to assess their epilepsy knowledge pre-education and a similar form along with feedback questions post the session. As the feedback received was excellent the BMC asked us to continue sessions for their teachers – the target being to cover the 10000 teachers on their rolls. **So far, we have completed sessions for their primary school teachers which have had a total of 4377 attendees! Thanks to our team – Drs.Pravina Shah, PradnyaGadgil, Urvashi Shah, Jayanti Mani, Sangeeta Ravat, Joy Desai and volunteers Pooja Nandi, Nola Shah and Carol D’Souza.**

### The 50 Million Steps Campaign!

As soon as IBE announced the 50 Million Steps Campaign, Samman created a WhatsApp group of participants. Siddhita our intern created and uploaded 3 new social media posts each week for it to gain momentum. The 50M Steps WhatsApp group soon had more than 150 members! And these members and supporters got their friends and family members to participate too! People from Vadodara and Delhi joined in as well. Each day from 4th Jan to 8th Feb, Samman members would inform of the steps taken by them and post photos and these Siddhita collated and uploaded on the International Epilepsy Day website. **By 8th Feb Samman and friends completed 27 Million steps! This was not all, as lockdown eased, we met in small groups at open places in 4 different areas in Mumbai, walked together with our bibs and then had snacks at a nearby restaurant or in a home. This was most memorable as it was the only time, we met in the last 12 months! NavinKarecha from Vadodara deserves a special mention for conducting a huge epilepsy awareness program on the 8th of Feb which had the press in attendance as well.**





## Digital Presence & Purple Day

Through the year we have been very active on social media, uploading 3 original posts each week on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. This year we celebrated Purple Day with an online quiz.

Though we miss meeting each other, we do have the satisfaction of knowing that we have reached out and educated more than 5000 people during the pandemic which would otherwise have not been possible. Looking forward to continuing online epilepsy education even when covid free!

Reported by  
DR.BINDU MENON

NELLORE

International Epilepsy Day was observed on February 8th this year. This year focused on spreading awareness by walking 50 million steps for epilepsy. Nellore chapter held an awareness programme with the walker's association on February 7th. An early morning talk was held at A C Subba Reddy stadium. After the walkers completed their walk, everyone assembled for the awareness talk on epilepsy. The programme began with introductory remarks by the office bearers of the walkers association. This was followed by a talk by Dr. Bindu Menon. The talk detailed the types of epilepsy, triggers, myths and facts of epilepsy. The talk highlighted the stigma, treatment gap and marriage issues. The audience was a mixed gathering. There was an excellent interaction with the audience.

On February 8th, a talk on the local ACT television about epilepsy was given. The talk covered a large audience.





Reported by  
SARAS RAJENDRA

KOCHI

International Epilepsy Day is observed on the first Monday of February which this year fell on February 8th. The IBE had started a global campaign #50millionsteps starting January 4th and concluding on International Epilepsy Day. It is estimated that there are 50 million persons with epilepsy globally, so the campaign was a symbolic step for them in support and to raise awareness about this much maligned and misunderstood condition.

IEA Kochi held a #epilepsywalk on February 7, at the historic and scenic Fort Kochi area. Early in the morning members met on the lawns of the iconic Cochin Club to start the walk, holding placards giving information about the campaign. The walk went past the St Francis Church along the scenic beach with the background of the Chinese fishing nets, around the Parade Ground and concluded at the club lawns. We distributed pamphlets disseminating information about Epilepsy and how eminently treatable the condition is. Curious early morning walkers stopped to ask about the campaign and about epilepsy. Together we were able to walk 52500 steps for epilepsy.

On February 8th senior IEA member and eminent Epileptologist, Dr K. Radhakrishnan, gave a talk on UTV about epilepsy and its myths and misconceptions. The talk generated a good response among the public.





## AWARDS



**DR.K.P.VINAYAN**

ILAE - Asia Oceania outstanding Achievement Award

Dr. K P Vinayan is presently the Professor and Head of the Department of Pediatric Neurology, Amrita School of Medicine and a lead faculty at the Amrita Advanced Center for Epilepsy, Cochin, Kerala, India. He had his training in Epileptology from National Epilepsy Center, Shizuoka, Japan under a fellowship program from Japanese Epilepsy Research Foundation in 2005. Epilepsy Society of Australia awarded him the Asia- Oceania fellowship in 2008 and he underwent further advanced training in surgical epileptology at Westmead Epilepsy program, Sydney, Australia. Dr. Vinayan currently serves as a core member of both the ILAE Commission for Diagnostic Methods and the Asian Epilepsy Academy. He is also a member of EEG, research advocacy, neonatal seizure classification and management taskforces of ILAE. He also serves as the treasurer of the Indian Epilepsy Society. He is the current convener of the Pediatric Neurology subsection of Indian Academy of Neurology. He was a member of the Pediatrics Commission of ILAE and also the editor of Epilepsy India, the joint news letter of Indian Epilepsy Association and Indian Epilepsy Society during the period 2013-17. As the secretary of the Indian Epilepsy Association, Kochi, he was instrumental in the implementation of the 'Helping Hands' program – a financial support scheme for flood affected persons with epilepsy in 2018 and also developing a help line for epilepsy patients during the Covid restrictions.



**Dr. (Prof.) Kavita Srivastava**  
Tadokoro Award

Dr. (Prof.) Kavita Srivastava (Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University Medical College, Pune) has received the Tadokoro first prize for platform presentation at the recently concluded 13th Asian-Oceanian Epilepsy Congress conducted virtually from Fukuoka, Japan (10-13 June 2021). This is her third Tadokoro award previously she has got best poster award at Xiamen (2008) and second-best poster award at Singapore (2014).

The paper was titled 'Significant treatment gap and co-morbidities identified in epidemiological survey of pediatric epilepsy in rural suburbs of India.' Dr. (Prof.) Surekha Rajadhyaksha, Dr. Ekta Agarwal, Dr. Raturaj Deshmukh and Dr. Vishwanath Kulkarni were co-authors, the study was funded by State health systems resource centre.

This was a comprehensive house to house survey of the entire population (75,455) residing in 61 villages around Pune. 19,181 children were screened using a screening questionnaire for seizure like events. The

screening instrument was validated by a field study in a slum area which showed sensitivity of 100% and specificity of 98.9%.

345 children were identified with seizures, all these houses were visited by pediatric neurologist. 58 were seizure mimics, 221 were febrile / isolated seizures and 66 were diagnosed with epilepsy. Those diagnosed with epilepsy were evaluated for any co-morbidities, treatment gap and etiology. EEG was made available at the local center. The care givers were interviewed to find the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) regarding epilepsy in their child.

Point prevalence of pediatric epilepsy was estimated to be 3.44 per 1000 children. 53% had focal epilepsy, 31.8% had epilepsy syndrome, 44% had at least one comorbidity. Etiology was identified in 68% cases, commonest being perinatal brain insult (22%). Treatment gap was found in 45.45%, with significant deficiencies noted in knowledge regarding epilepsy and social discrimination causing stigma. Epilepsy needs to be integrated with other National health programs, to help with timely diagnosis and optimum care of these rural children, including the associated co-morbidities.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Your feedback for the ILAE Primary Care Curriculum is solicited.



The International League Against Epilepsy, Primary Care Task Force has designed an Epilepsy Curriculum for Primary Healthcare physicians and other workers. Your feedback and that of your primary care colleagues is invaluable and would help us in refining the curriculum. Hence, please spare 5 minutes to provide your feedback and also disseminate and ask your primary care contacts to do likewise.

The curriculum can be accessed at: <https://www.ilae.org/education/input-requested-new-primary-care-curriculum>

Please click the feedback link in the curriculum page. The link is also provided separately here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PD7FG5V>

Many thanks in advance,

Gagandeep Singh, DM, FAMS, FRCP

Chair, Primary Care Task Force of the International League Against Epilepsy



# THE 50TH GOLDEN JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIAN EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION!



The 50th Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the Indian Epilepsy Association!

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The Indian Epilepsy Association was registered on March 20, 1970 at Mumbai. Its first meeting was held on January 27, 1971. The founding members were Prof. Baldev Singh, Prof. B Ramamurthi, Dr. TK Ghosh, Dr. AD Desai, Dr. NH Wadia, Dr. KV Mathai, Dr. KS Mani and Dr. RM Dastur. These founding leaders and in the recent times, others, in particular Dr. HV Srinivas, DR. VS Saxena, Dr. BS Singhal, Dr. Pravina Shah, Dr. M. Gourie Devi and Dr. Satish Jain to mention only few have led the Association in order to achieve its current glory.

The IEA Governing Council has mulled over a number of proposals on how to commemorate the 50th Anniversary. Suggestions from all IEA members are invited. We would like each and every member to contribute and participate in the year-long celebrations. We are indeed somewhat constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic. Needless to add, however, we are committed to celebrate the Anniversary in a grant and befitting yet safe and appropriate manner. Please watch this page for further developments and announcements.



**Dr. B. Vengamma,**  
President,  
Indian Epilepsy Association



**Dr. Man Mohan Mehndiratta,**  
Past-President,  
Indian Epilepsy Association



**Dr. P. Satishchandra,**  
President-Elect,  
Indian Epilepsy Association



**Dr. Gagandeep Singh,**  
Secretary,  
Indian Epilepsy Association



**Dr. R. Surekha,**  
Treasurer,  
Indian Epilepsy Association



Dr Ashok Panagariya

With folded hands and a heart brimming with the cherished memories of our mentor and Guru, Dr Ashok Panagariya, we pay homage to his noble soul and his exemplary life.

He was an icon and a legend, who easily, effortlessly and successfully wore many hats. As his students we have always felt proud of his astounding achievements and have always been mesmerized by his charismatic and charming personality. An extraordinary academician and clinical teacher, an eloquent speaker, a writer and a compassionate listener, an advisor and guide! The pearls of wisdom he gave, invariably enlightened one and all and opened gates of a wider vision.

His brilliant sense of humour, practical sense, inspiring words and positivity always had an infectious effect on us and helped bring out the best in all. His eternal optimism brushed on to everyone. Thinking beyond the traditional limits and always fathoming the beyond, his enthusiasm and curiosity were unstoppable. He loved the science of Astrology and always explored the horizons of science and beyond resulting in his extraordinary interest in the "brain body mind" approach.

His faith in God was unshakeable and the source of his inexhaustible energy.

If one was to learn to balance life and work, one has to turn to see the way Dr Panagariya disciplined himself, without over indulgent or self-deprivation. It's a wonder, how smoothly he flowed between the various spheres of life. He would never be short of time to do all that he valued, his work and academics about which he was passionate, spending time with family and friends whom he deeply cared for and pursuing his interests which fuelled his heart and soul.

He was a philanthropist, gave with an open heart to so many social causes.

His philosophy of leading life with elan, which he did, while being detached inwardly has been recorded by him for us and the future generations in his last contribution, the book

"Monk in a merc" (Mercedes) - Moksha in the material world, which is due for release. And we are eternally grateful that he has left this book to us, as his last gift, which we will always treasure.

His physical demise is an irreplaceable loss to the society, to the Neurology family, to all who know him personally. But the life of such an extraordinary personality does not end with the physical body, it continues in our hearts and souls, in his values and teachings.

Such a legendary life can only be celebrated in all its glory and brilliance. we pay our humble Shraddhanjali to Dr. Panagariya with bowed heads.

Dr Bhawna Sharma  
Dr Parul Dubey  
Dr Madhuparna Paul





## Indian Epilepsy Association

### Epilepsy and COVID-19 Vaccination

- **COVID-19 vaccine is safe in people with epilepsy.**
- The side effects of COVID 19 vaccine include pain or swelling at the injection site, headache, chills, fatigue, and muscle aches or fever that resolve in 24-48 hours.
- Till date there are no reports to suggest any worsening in seizure frequency after COVID-19 vaccination
- The current data is not sufficient to suggest the safety of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant and lactating women with epilepsy
- At present, there are no COVID-19 vaccines recommended in children (with epilepsy).
- There is no evidence that persons with epilepsy are at higher risk of side effects after vaccination or it results in worsening of the epilepsy.
- High temperature post vaccination can trigger seizures in people with epilepsy. However, the available data about the risks of COVID and the safety of the COVID vaccines strongly support vaccination
- **People with epilepsy should take their anti-seizure medication as scheduled without any disruption during vaccination.**



**Dr. Sita Jayalakshmi, Hyderabad**  
Governing Council Member, IEA



**Dr. Joy Desai, Mumbai**  
Governing Council Member, IEA



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