

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025, VOLUME 8 / ISSUE-2

AFPI
Academy of Family Physicians of India
KERALA CHAPTER



AFPI
KeralaM

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Cover page:
Painting by



Dr. Delina Devis
Family Medicine Resident
Lourdes Hospital Kochi

MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY

Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings from the Academy of Family Physicians of India, Kerala Chapter! It is indeed a privilege to serve this vibrant community of family physicians who are at the heart of strengthening primary care. Our collective efforts through academic programs, training and advocacy are steadily shaping the future of Family Medicine in Kerala.

As the Secretary, I sincerely thank each of you for your active participation and unwavering support. Your contributions ensure that AFPI Kerala remains a platform for learning, sharing, and growing together as professionals dedicated to holistic, continuous, and compassionate care. In the months ahead, we aim to expand our academic activities, strengthen collaborations, and create more opportunities for young doctors to engage with Family Medicine. I invite all members to continue their involvement, share ideas, and join hands in building a stronger foundation for primary healthcare delivery in our state. Together, let us move forward with the mission of making Family Medicine the backbone of community health.

As our milestone event - the 10th Annual state conference - AFPICON Kerala 2026 is happening at Contour Backwaters Resort, Changanassery on 31/01/26 & 01/02/26; I take this opportunity to welcome all of you to the conference. See you there!

With warm regards,



Dr. Mansoor P. M
Secretary, AFPI Kerala.

EDITOR'S DESK

Dear AFPI Kerala Family Members,

Warm greetings from the editorial desk of the AFPI Kerala Newsletter Committee.

It is with immense pleasure that we present the second edition of our newsletter, released on the occasion of National Family Medicine Day-September 27. This edition reflects our collective journey in strengthening the voice and value of family medicine across our state and beyond.

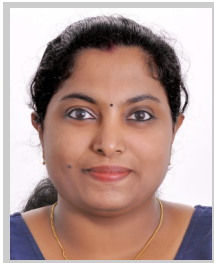
We are proud to feature updates on ongoing initiatives, CME programs, member achievements, and a range of insightful articles.

A heartfelt thank you to all our contributors, reviewers, and supporters who made this publication possible.

As always, your feedback is invaluable to us. If you have any thoughts on this issue - what you loved, what could be improved; please don't hesitate to reach out. We are committed to making each edition better for you.

Let us continue to grow together, advocate for family medicine, and serve with purpose.

With best wishes,



Dr. Sangeetha S

Chair, AFPI Kerala Newsletter Committee

AFPI Kerala - Quarterly Report

AFPI Kerala is structured into three zones, each comprising multiple district chapters. All three zones actively participated in commemorating World Family Doctors' Day. Various programs and awareness activities were conducted by zonal and district chapters to highlight the importance of family medicine and primary care.

AFPI Kerala Cricket Team participated in the All Kerala Doctors' Specialty Cricket Tournament "Hospex" held in Thrissur. The team secured the Second Runner-Up Trophy. This marked the second tournament in which the AFPI Kerala team has competed. The prestigious AFPI National Clinical Meet series (September 2025) was successfully hosted by the AFPI Kerala Chapter. The event witnessed active participation from family physicians across the country. AFPI Kerala members were part of the Indian delegation attending the WONCA World Conference 2025, held in Lisbon, Portugal.

As part of the global event, the Kerala team conducted a well-received workshop on "Homecare-Based Management and Comprehensive Elderly Assessment."



AFPI Kerala - South Zone Quarterly Report

World Family Doctor Day celebration: May 19 , 2025



World Family Doctor Day 2025 was celebrated on May 19th at KIMSHEALTH, Thiruvananthapuram, in collaboration with the AFPI Kerala –Thiruvananthapuram Chapter, and Spice Route Kerala. The event was formally inaugurated by Dr.M.I. Sahadulla, Chairman, KIMSHEALTH, Trivandrum. He underscored the significance of strengthening primary healthcare and championed policy reforms to elevate family medicine doctors as pivotal players in India's healthcare landscape.

Dr. Aravind Thampi, Senior Consultant in Psychology, delivered an insightful workshop on “Developing Mental Resilience in the Workplace.” This was followed by a rejuvenating session on "Learning the art of Breathing" led by Dr. Neetu Gupta and Dr. Bhavya S, Consultant Pediatricians at KIMSHEALTH.

The celebration came alive with vibrant cultural performances by the KIMSHEALTH family, drawing in around 100 enthusiastic participants, including doctors, nurses and other staff members of KIMS who thoroughly



Monthly CME Meeting June 2025

The meeting commenced at 7:30 PM with a warm welcome by Dr. Jithin Joseph, President of the AFPI Kerala Thiruvananthapuram Chapter.

AFPI Kerala - South Zone Quarterly Report



There were 2 Scientific Sessions:

1. Aging Well – The Role of Vaccination” presented by Dr. Shalini N
2. Acute Febrile Illness in the Tropics–Diagnostic Challenges by Dr. Ramesh Gopi

The sessions were expertly moderated by Dr. Vishnu B S, Specialist in Family Medicine, and Dr. Athul Vyas, Specialist in Geriatrics. The meeting was attended by 13 participants, and session concluded at 8:45 PM

Awareness session: Blossoming with Confidence: Understanding Growth, Menstruation and Hygiene: 17th June At PMSHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya, AFSakkulam, Thiruvananthapuram

An orientation session was conducted by Dr. Aiswarya V Namboodiri, Specialist, Family medicine & Executive member, AFPI Kerala

& State lead, Spice Route Kerala chapter to educate young girls of 4th and 5th standard on physical growth, early understanding of menstruation, and personal hygiene. Dr. Aiswarya delivered the session using child-friendly language and interactive tools. The students showed active participation, and the session was well-received by both students and teachers. The session successfully created awareness and encouraged confidence and self-care practices among the students.



Monthly CME Meeting July 2025

AFPI Kerala - Thiruvananthapuram Chapter conducted monthly Continuing Medical Education (CME) program on 25th July 2025 at Hotel Residency Towers, Trivandrum from 7pm to 8.30pm. The session began with a warm welcome address by Dr. Vishnu BS, National PG Coordinator, TSRIM AFPI, followed by three insightful academic

AFPI Kerala - South Zone Quarterly Report

sessions:

- Tackling Asthma Exacerbation –Dr.Sujith Varghese Abraham, Consultant Pulmonologist, KIMSHealth Trivandrum
- COPD – GOLD 2025 Updates – Dr.Vineetha Nair, Consultant Pulmonologist, District Hospital Kollam
- Clinical Demonstration of Various Devices in Respiratory Medicine



AFPI Kerala Thiruvananthapuram Chapter & Spice Route Kerala Chapter



Monthly Academic Session - July 25th 2025



The academic proceedings were moderated by Dr. Wilson A P (Senior Consultant and

Coordinator, Internal Medicine, KIMSHealth Trivandrum) and Dr. Niveditha G (Consultant Family Physician, SRK Clinic, Kollam). The CME witnessed active participation with 55 delegates from various hospital and clinics across the district.

The session concluded with vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Shalini N, AFPI Kerala Thiruvananthapuram Chapter Secretary.

AFPI KERALA STATE CHAPTER-SOUTH ZONE CME -17/08/2025

The AFPI Kerala Chapter South Zone Conducted a CME and Hands on Workshop –“BEYOND THE MYTHS: ADVANCING CLINICAL PRACTICE THROUGH EVIDENCE BASED CARE” on 17/08/25 at Nani Hotels and Resorts, Kollam in association with Spice Route ,Kerala. The CME was formally inaugurated by Shri.N.K. Premachandran, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, who highlighted the vital role of family physicians in strengthening primary health care and bridging gaps in the health care system.



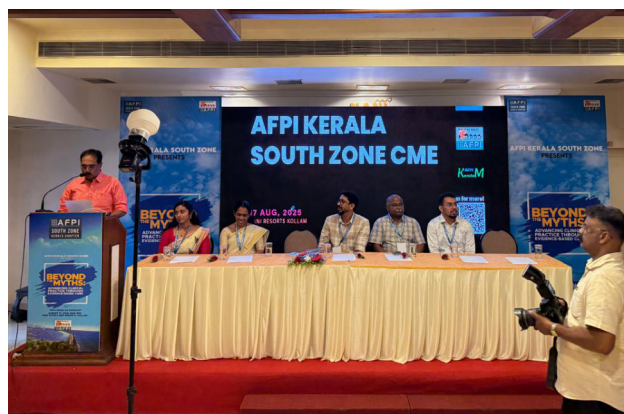
AFPI Thiruvananthapuram Chapter Monthly Meet August 2025



AFPI Kerala - South Zone Quarterly Report

The event was presided over by Dr. Lekshmi C.R., Organising Chairperson and South Zone President and welcomed by Dr. Amal P, President, AFPI Kerala-Kollam District Chapter. the event was felicitated by national and state leaders of Academy of Family Physicians of India. The CME included scientific sessions led by distinguished faculty covering diverse topics relevant to family medicine practice and hands on workshop.

The programme was attended by a large number of family physicians, postgraduate trainees and general practitioners from across the south zone, reflecting the enthusiasm of the medical fraternity towards continuous learning and professional development. The interactive sessions provided an excellent platform for updating clinical knowledge, sharing experiences, and discussing strategies to improve patient care at the grassroots level.



Monthly CME Meeting August 2025

Academy of Family Physicians of India (AFPI) Kerala - Thiruvananthapuram Chapter & Spice Route Kerala Chapter conducted monthly Continuing Medical Education (CME) program on 26th August 2025 at Hotel Residency Towers, Trivandrum from 7pm to 8.30pm.

The session began with a warm welcome address by Dr Jithin Joseph followed by the academic session
Academic Session
UNMASKING OSA - A PRIMARY CARE PERSPECTIVE
by Dr. Aswathy G,
Associate Consultant, Pulmonology, KIMS Health Trivandrum.

The academic proceedings were moderated by Dr. Vishnu B S.

AFPI Kerala State & SouthZone Executive committee members also joined our event

The CME witnessed active participation with 20 delegates from various hospitals and clinics across the district. The session concluded with vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Shalini N.

AFPI Kerala - Midzone Quarterly Report

AFPI Kerala Alappuzha chapter conducted an online CME hosted by Dr Anand P M (AFPI Kerala State Treasurer) on Building Mental Resilience in a changing world-Role of Family Physicians in connection with the World Family Doctor's Day on May 19th from 8.30 pm to 9 pm. The speaker was Dr Soumya Raj T J, MBBS, DNB Psychiatry Nodal officer-district mental health programme Alappuzha. Dr Bindhu Priya, President AFPI Kerala Alappuzha chapter gave the welcome speech and talked about the importance of supporting patients' mental health. Dr. Preethi P T (President Midzone, AFPI Kerala chapter) introduced the speaker.



Dr. Resmi S Kaimal (General Secretary AFPI), Dr. Nadeem Abooty (President AFPI Kerala chapter), Dr. Mansoor P.M. (Secretary, AFPI Kerala) and Dr. Ann Maria (Secretary, AFPI Kerala, Midzone) felicitated the event. Dr. Soumya gave an excellent talk on strategies for building mental resilience, importance of positive relationships and developing mindfulness. The CME was attended by 25 online participants. Dr. Anand AFPI Kerala state treasurer thanked the participants. Dr. Vishnu B.S. (Spice Route India), Dr. Sumayya Sharaf (Secretary AFPI Kerala Alappuzha chapter), Dr. Anju Sreedharan (treasurer, Alappuzha chapter), Dr. Jayanthi C (Vice president, Alappuzha chapter) attended the meeting.



AFPI Kerala - Midzone Quarterly Report



AFPI Kerala Ernakulam chapter conducted the monthly CME on 25th August at Olive downtown ,Kadavanthra. Dr Rashmi Kurup- AFPI Kerala Ernakulam chapter President welcomed everyone. Dr Muhammed Zameer, Consultant Gastroenterologist, City Hospital gave a very informative talk on MASLD-early detection and management. Dr. Najeeba K T, DNB resident from Lourdes Hospital presented a case on Febrile Seizure and Dr. Serin Kuriakose, AFPI National treasurer and Dr. Resmi S Kaimal, AFPI General Secretary moderated the session.



Dr Dhananjay S Mohan, AFPI Kerala Ernakulam Secretary gave the vote of thanks. Dr. Anoop K J, Dr Prashanth S, Dr Jisha V, Dr Asha Thomas, Dr Ann Maria and Dr Aparna R Palloor felicitated the event. Total attendance was 34.

AFPI Kerala Ernakulam chapter conducted the next monthly CME on 29TH August at IMA hall, Kochi from 7pm to 9 pm. The meeting commenced with a welcome speech

by Dr Rashmi Kurup-President AFPI Kerala Ernakulam chapter. Dr. Dileep M Narayanan Senior Consultant and lead interventional cardiologist, Welcare Hospital delivered a talk on Heart Failure-diagnosis & management. Dr Dhanus Sadasivan Nair, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist gave the next talk on Dyslipidemia –management guidelines. The sessions were highly interactive and informative followed by active participation from attendees. Vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Dhananjay S Mohan, expressing gratitude to speakers, participants and organisers. Twenty family physicians attended the event including national, state and midzone leaders. The meeting concluded successfully with an engaging academic exchange and discussion.



AFPI Kerala Midzone will be conducting the Midzone CME in November in Ernakulam with variety of important topics, registration will be opening soon.



AFPI Kerala- North Zone Quarterly Report

AFPI KERALA NORTH ZONE KANNUR CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



The AFPI Kerala – Kannur Chapter carried forward its academic mission from May to August 2025 with a series of thoughtfully curated CME programs. Each session brought together family physicians, domain experts, and thought leaders, ensuring an engaging mix of science, discussion, and practical learning.

The second CME session of the year was held on 15th May 2025 at Hotel Pearl View, Thalassery. The session featured Dr. Mohamed Yasid C M, Consultant Gastroenterologist at KIMS Sreechand Hospital, Kannur, as the speaker. He delivered an insightful lecture on “Metabolic Dysfunction Associated Fatty Liver Disease (MAFLD): Assessment and Management as a Primary Care Physician.” The session was well attended by 15 participants, who benefitted from practical guidelines on screening, assessment, and early management strategies of this emerging lifestyle disorder.

The third monthly CME was organized on 27th June 2025 at Hotel Benale International, Kannur, the resource person was Dr. Muhammed Razmi T, Consultant Dermatologist and Clinical Head at Dr. Afra's Ziva Skin and Hair Clinic, Kannur. He spoke on the topic “A Practical Update on Novel Technologies in Dermatology,” highlighting innovations such as dermoscopy, non-invasive diagnostic tools, and advanced therapeutic

approaches. The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of 20 family physicians, with an engaging Q&A session that made the evening both interactive and practical.



The fourth CME session took place on 24th July 2025 at Sree Gokulam Forte, Thalassery. Dr. T. Karthikeyan, Consultant Interventional Cardiologist at Indiana TMH Cardiac Centre, Thalassery, was the invited speaker. His presentation on “Chronic Coronary Syndrome – Tailoring Antiplatelet Therapy for the Long Run” emphasized patient-centered approaches and long-term strategies for risk reduction. The program was attended by 15 participants, who appreciated the clarity with which he bridged evidence-based cardiology with practical decision-making in primary care.

The fifth CME of the series was held on 26th August 2025 at Hotel Blu Nile, Kannur. The speaker for the evening was Dr. Dhanin P, Assistant Professor in the Department of Nephrology at Government Medical College, Kannur. His talk, titled “Cracking the Code: Interpreting Kidney Function Tests in Primary Care,” was a highly relevant and practice-oriented session. With the presence of 15 attendees, the CME offered practical tips and case-based discussions that simplified the interpretation of renal parameters in day-to-day clinical practice.

AFPI Kerala- North Zone Quarterly Report

Between May and August 2025, the Kannur Chapter of AFPI Kerala successfully organized four CMEs that spanned critical areas of gastroenterology, dermatology, cardiology, and nephrology. Each event was marked by active participation, high-quality deliberations, and a focus on empowering family physicians with updated, practical knowledge



AFPI KERALA NORTH ZONE



The AFPI Kerala –Kozhikode Chapter carried forward its academic mission from May to August 2025 with few curated CME programs. Each session brought together family physicians, domain experts, as well as Family medicine graduates

The 1st programme of the quarter was conducted on 11th June 2025 at Hotel Hyson Kozhikode. The session was a case presentation done by Dr Hirash, PG 1 at Aster MIMS Kozhikode. It was attended by 13 members. The session was expertly moderated by Dr Joice George, Consultant and HOD in Family medicine, IQRAA hospital Kozhikode. The meeting was further enriched by insightful contributions from Dr.Bijayraj, AFPI founding member.

The next programme of the quarter was conducted on 20th August 2025 at Hotel Tripenta, Kozhikode. Dr. DipinKumar (Senior consultant Physician at Aster MIMS Kozhikode) presented an informative session on “Approach to Proteinuria”. It was followed by very engaging discussions and question answer sessions. It was a very useful session for general practitioners and PGs from various colleges.

AFPI KERALA NORTH ZONE PALAKKAD CHAPTER ACTIVITIES



AFPI Kerala- North Zone Quarterly Report



The Palakkad District chapter of AFPI Kerala actively organized academic and awareness programs during this quarter with a focus on promoting Family Medicine and addressing relevant public health concerns.

On World Family Doctors Day May 19, 2025, AFPI Kerala- Palakkad district chapter conducted an insightful orientation session on family medicine to interns, final years and 3rd year students of Government medical college Palakkad. Dr Ambili Ranjith (Joint Secretary, AFPI Kerala North zone) Dr Sreedha K (President, AFPI Kerala Palakkad district chapter), Dr Adarsh R (Secretary, AFPI Kerala Palakkad district chapter) and Dr Jayashree spoke in detail about principles and scope of family medicine.

On June 2nd, 2025, an awareness talk on Substance abuse among teenagers was conducted at Sanjo College of Pharmaceutical Science, Chithali, Palakkad. Around 70 students and 10 faculty members attended the insightful session AFPI Kerala – Palakkad District Chapter CME. The quarterly CME of AFPI Palakkad was held on 17th September 2025 at Hotel Distrikt-9, Palakkad.

Dr. Sreedha K, President, welcomed the gathering. Felicitations were delivered by Dr. Nigesh (President, AFPI North Zone) and Dr. Ambili (Joint Secretary, AFPI North Zone).

The scientific session was led by Dr. Gigin S.V., Consultant Nephrologist & Transplant Surgeon, Ahalia Diabetes Hospital, on “Taming the Silent

Killer – Hypertension: New Updates.”

The informative and interactive session was attended by 38 doctors across specialties including house surgeons, General Practitioners and other specialists from Government and private sector. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Adarsh, Secretary, followed by dinner.

AFPI KERALA NORTH ZONE MALAPPURAM CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AFPI Kerala North Zone Conference.



The Malappuram District chapter had the privilege of hosting the AFPI Kerala North zone CME on 25th May 2025 at Hotel Prosland, Tirur. The inaugural function was presided over by AFPI Kerala North Zone President Dr. Nigesh V.

The Spice Route Kerala Chapter Activity Report

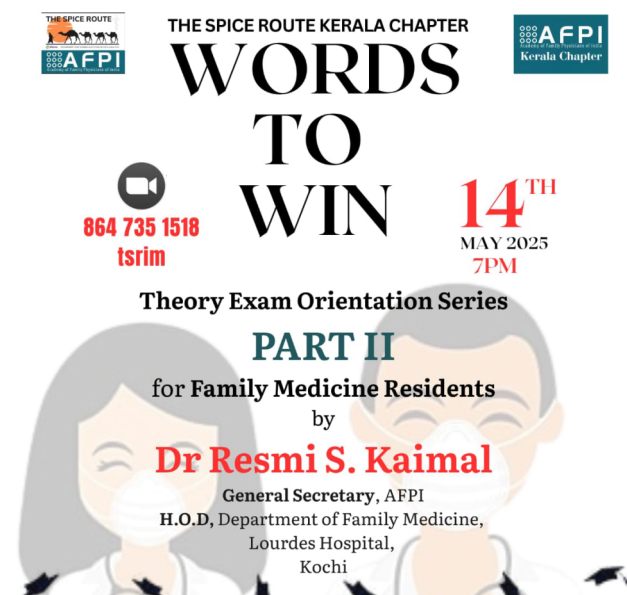
Reflect. Refine. Rise. Progress is not just about moving forward, it is about pausing, reflecting, and evolving. As a vibrant collective of young family physicians, the Spice Route Kerala Chapter embraces this philosophy wholeheartedly. Through continuous introspection and collaborative growth, we strive to bring out the very best in ourselves and in each other.

We are proud to present the Activity Report of the Spice Route Kerala Chapter, capturing our journey, milestones, and impact from May to September 2025. This report is more than a summary—it is a testament to our commitment, creativity, and community spirit.

Theory Exam Orientation Session 2025 WORDS TO WIN: Power-Packed Prep for Theory Exams

The Spice Route Kerala Chapter hosted a two-part academic session titled “Words to Win” on April 23 and May 14, 2025, designed to equip Family Medicine residents with smart strategies for acing their theory exams.

Led by the esteemed Dr. Resmi S Kaimal (AFPI National Secretary & HOD, Lourdes Hospital, Kochi), the session delivered high-impact insights drawn from years of experience.



THE SPICE ROUTE KERALA CHAPTER

WORDS TO WIN

14TH MAY 2025 7PM

Theory Exam Orientation Series

PART II

for Family Medicine Residents

by

Dr Resmi S. Kaimal

General Secretary, AFPI
H.O.D, Department of Family Medicine,
Lourdes Hospital,
Kochi

Session Highlights

- How to structure answers effectively
- Importance of attempting all questions
- Recommended textbooks
- Exam-day wellness: sleep & nutrition tips
- General exam rules and mindset prep

Resident Response The session was a hit—Zoom hit its 100-participant limit within 10 minutes! Residents actively engaged via chat, and feedback afterward was overwhelmingly positive.

Outcome: A confidence boost, clearer exam strategies, and a renewed sense of readiness among Kerala's future family physicians.

WORLD FAMILY DOCTORS DAY CELEBRATIONS – 2025

World Family Doctor Day 2025: Spreading the Spirit of Family Medicine In celebration of World Family Doctor Day 2025, the Spice Route Kerala Chapter, in collaboration with AFPI Kerala, took a creative leap forward by launching a short video campaign that beautifully captured the essence of Family Medicine.



These videos served as powerful visual narratives, highlighting the compassionate, comprehensive, and community-centered role of family physicians. The initiative not only celebrated the day—it amplified awareness, inspired young doctors, and connected deeply with the public.

Route India movement and fuels the broader vision of AFPI—creating well-rounded physicians who lead with both skill and soul.

May: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16ctxwD2Em/>

Workplace”. This was followed by a rejuvenating session on “Learning the art of Breathing” led by Dr. Neethu Gupta and Dr. Bhavya S, Consultant Pediatricians at KIMS Health. Welcome address was delivered by Dr. Lizy Vincent, Department Coordinator, Family Medicine and Country Lead of WWPWFM. The celebration came alive with vibrant cultural performances by the KIMS Health family, drawing in around 100 enthusiastic participants, including doctors, nurses and other staff members. Dr. Aiswarya V Namboodiri, Family medicine specialist and Executive member -AFPI Kerala and State Lead – The spice route Kerala chapter delivered the vote of thanks. Dr. Vishnu B S, National Spice Route PG and FM 360 coordinator was present in coordinating the event.

**“TALENT
TITAN”**

**The Spice Route
Kerala Chapter**

proudly
presents its

'Talent of the Month'

initiative,
showcasing the
creative brilliance of
young family doctors

Join us
in celebrating their
innovative spirit and
appreciating their
exceptional talents !

Whether it is art, music, writing, public speaking, or any creative pursuit, Talent Titan celebrates the multifaceted brilliance of our medical community. It is more than a program—it is a movement of self-expression, confidence-building, and personal growth.

By empowering young doctors to explore their passions, Talent Titan strengthens the Spice

The Spice Route Kerala Chapter Activity Report

Academic Activities:

Frequency: Monthly

Format: Case/topic presentations by family medicine residents, moderated by faculty members.

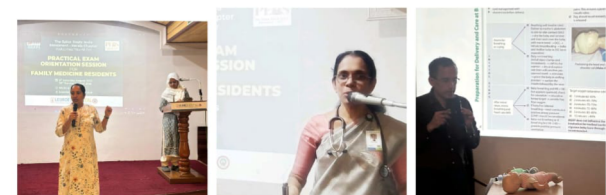
Response: Each session attended by around 90 participants across India.



The Spice Route Kerala chapter also collaborated with the AFPI Thiruvananthapuram chapter in their monthly CME on July 25, 2025 at Hotel

Residency Towers. The academic session was focused on respiratory medicine along with a workshop on clinical demonstration of devices in Pulmonology. The classroom session of the National Spice Route was hosted by the Kerala chapter on 31 July 2025.

Practical Exam Orientation Session at





A vibrant learning atmosphere that fostered confidence, clarity, and clinical readiness

The 2-day program was met with overwhelming appreciation, with residents praising the depth of content, quality of instruction, and the supportive environment that helped them feel truly exam-ready.

**THE SPICE ROUTE INDIA
MOVEMENT - AFPI**

CONGRATULATIONS!!

DR VISHNU B S
for being the winner of
**SPICE ROUTE
SOUTH ASIA REGION**

WHEN ONE OF US SHINES, ALL OF US SHINE

AFPI
Kerala Chapter

CONGRATULATIONS

DR VISHNU B S
on being selected
as the
Chair,
YDM SAR.
(YOUNG DOCTORS MOVEMENT-
SOUTH ASIA REGION)

Selected as the Chair, Young Doctors Movement
– South Asia Region (YDM SAR)



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Palliative care pioneer: an interview with Dr. M R Rajagopal

Padma Shri Dr. M R Rajagopal is a palliative care physician (anaesthesiologist) and professor referred to as the “Father of palliative care in India” in honour of his significant contributions to this field. A recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honours, Dr. Rajagopal was notably nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in both 2018 and 2023.

In a heartfelt conversation with the humble and compassionate pioneer, we delved into the nuances of palliative care and its impact at the Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences (TIPS), Pallium India's esteemed pain and palliative care center.

Q. Sir, what shaped you to become the palliative care physician that you are?

A. I became an anaesthetist by chance. I learnt from my experiences that pain is the most ignored symptom. It is not taught thoroughly in medical schools or in clinics. I started learning about pain and its management from books. Very little space was dedicated to the treatment of pain. Initially, I ventured into this journey by doing nerve blocks with whatever learning my books could offer. My patients taught me many more important lessons.

I had a patient who was a college professor. He was suffering from a late-stage cancer and was in a lot of pain. I was able to alleviate much of his pain with my nerve blocks. I saw him smile after a long while of sufferings, hope brimming from his tired face. He then asked me when he should return after the consultation. I said it's not required unless the pain reemerges. I was mentally patting myself on the back for this achievement. But that night, he went home and committed suicide. I later learnt that nobody had told him about the prognosis of his cancer.

The oncologist had referred him to me saying henceforth, I will handle his treatment. When I told him that he needn't come back, it seemed to confirm his worst fears – that his condition was incurable. My words must have conveyed to him that his pain had been conquered but temporarily. He most likely did not want to go back to that pain

or the needles ever again. He took the only exit he felt he could, leaving behind his young wife and 2 children. I believe that he might have died to teach me a lesson that patients are made of more than just nerves. He taught me that doctors should look beyond body mechanics.

We have the responsibility of recognizing, acknowledging and honouring the human beings that entrust their life to us. I learnt the art and science of palliative care - some from books, many from my patients. Many colleagues and good-hearted people joined me. We were able to become a community. A need for compassion, coupled with competence is very important.



Q. Can you describe some of the early challenges you faced in establishing palliative care services in India, particularly in terms of access to opioids and community awareness?

A. Change is always resisted. Status quo is very comfortable and any deviation from the said normal will always face some resistance. At times it will feel threatening. There will be feelings of anger, coupled with the fear of commitment, incompetency and lack of impact once change is implemented. I, along with likeminded colleagues, did face a lot of resistance. We have struggled, failed and yet have kept on trying. Along with bureaucratic hurdles, overcoming professional resistance was also a major challenge. It did take a long time for such a

Palliative care pioneer: an interview with Dr. M R Rajagopal

change to become acceptable. A change, in general was required at macro level, i.e. in Government policies, laws and healthcare system. It was also required at micro level- in the community. For the working of any palliative care organisation, we have to integrate many aspects- healthcare, social and financial aspects. Social support with the help of social workers and community participation are very essential. Awareness and communication are the key to success. Health is physical, social, and mental wellbeing and all these support systems are required. Coming back to your question, the main challenges faced were resistance to change, lack of education, lack of availability and legal restrictions over control medications. Lack of availability of social and emotional support as a part of the hospital systems was also a major hurdle. The implementation of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 2014 is complete in many Indian states. Still persistent effort is ongoing and required.

Q. How does Pallium India address the palliative care needs of patients across different states in India, and what are the organisation's notable achievements?

A. The mission of Pallium India is D, E and F – Demonstration, Education and Facilitation. Demonstration of patient care in institutions and their homes. We have home care teams that go and care for the patient at their homes. The Asthana Declaration has mentioned that care must reach people where they are, where they need it. Most of the needy people do not get the care they need, the care they deserve due to lack of awareness and resources. Pallium India has around 7 home visit teams, 14 in-patient beds and OP clinics.

Our Demonstration is also a care system that partners with communication. In Trivandrum, there are a dozen link centres -both in the city and suburbs like Murukumpuzha, Pallode etc. The local activists own the program. Our teams go to Pallode twice weekly and volunteers join. We

conduct home visits and OP clinics. The locals are aware of the many problems and limitations we face and are very supportive. See Dr. Aiswarya, what is the use of having morphine in stock at home when your roof is leaking? As I already mentioned, health is a state of physical, social and mental wellbeing. I am not saying that doctors must look into everything, because practically it's not possible. That's where the role of social worker comes in, that's where community engagement and participation become important.

Our next motto is Education – Spreading education about palliative care and awareness. Palliative care is not just terminal or end of life care. It is an ongoing process right when the patient is diagnosed with a terminal disease. The care extends even after the death of the person as bereavement support to the family and care givers. Pallium India has online and offsite educational courses.

We facilitate the start of training programs in palliative care in hospitals and institutions. We facilitate the integration of palliative care into health care settings. For instance, my colleague Dr. Alka Ganesh was instrumental in integrating palliative care into geriatrics. Likewise there has been integration of palliative care in Oncology and Pulmonology. Pallium India's Trivandrum Institute of Palliative Sciences (TIPS) is a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre. This designation allows Pallium India to work more closely with the WHO on initiatives to make pain relief and palliative care more accessible in India and beyond. Palliative care units are not our ultimate aim. Our mission and goals are integration of palliative care into medical curriculum, every medical profession and into every medical specialty.

Q. Your advocacy contributed to changes in India's Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. Can you discuss the impacts of these and other policy changes?

A. It took 19 years to change the NDPS Act. It happened in 2014. According to this, any medical

Palliative care pioneer: an interview with Dr. M R Rajagopal

institution with one doctor having training in pain management is a Registered Medical Institution (RMI). RMI does not need any form of license to stock or dispense Essential Narcotic Drugs (ENDS) -E.g. Morphine, Methadone and Fentanyl. They need to have only the RMI certificate and the necessary recordings and documentation. The palliative care community has always been engaged in advocacy. This had led to the inclusion of palliative care in the National Health Policy 2017. National medical Council (NMC) has included palliative care in MBBS curriculum from 2019 and in BSc nursing course since 2022.

If palliative care is integrated into every medical profession, every single doctor would be able to acknowledge and treat pain. Another thing I would like to point out is that the teaching of basic communication skill is lacking in India, unlike in the European countries. In UK, for instance, a medical student gets around 36-100 hours of training solely in communication. The impact of our work has now led to the inclusion of communication, pain management and end of life care in medical curriculum.

Q. Sir, a palliative care physician sees a lot of grief and sufferings- you have to deal with it on a day-to-day basis. How do you cope with these situations?

A. So you mean to ask, how does a palliative care professional willingly get involved in a world of suffering, right?

See, it's not easy. But by willingly entering it, you not only take in the pain and suffering of the patient, but also get in return lots of love, gratitude and a visible improvement in their symptoms. Suffering may hurt, but gratification of helping a fellow human being can help in our healing. Secondly, when we become too much affected, we share it with our colleagues. Every palliative care worker must be available for their colleagues for emotional support.

Thirdly, we remind ourselves that we are only human beings. We can't solve all the problems.

But by doing what we can to help them, we can significantly make a difference in their lives. Rarely, if you feel a patient's suffering is affecting you too much, it is better to involve friends /other colleagues. But if the patient insists- that you alone take care of them, just be honest- explain why others have to step in at this point. There is no single strategy that works for all. Coping mechanism will vary from person to person.

Q. In your memoir “Walk with the Weary”, you share lessons learned from your experiences. What are some of the key takeaways you'd like to convey to readers?

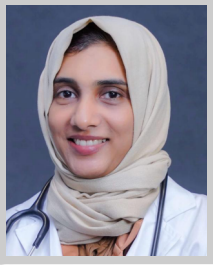
A. The key takeaways would be that health care should be healthcare- the focus must always be on all its aspects-physical, social and mental wellbeing. A compassionate end of life care is required. Such a compassionate care can only be achieved when every health care system accepts it. Unfortunately, the main concentration is only on the treatment of diseases. The well-being of the patient, most of the times, is ignored. This must change. I have included stories in my book to illustrate this. A patient is much more than his/her disease. I end the book with a plea to make health care more compassionate.

Thank you Dr. Rajagopal for taking time out of your busy schedule and for sharing your experiences. Thank you for all the hard work and dedication that you and the palliative care community have put in to create awareness and make the world of the weary a better place to live in. You had to face many ordeals for stating the obvious to this world - that the terminally ill also have the right to a life with reduced sufferings. Thank you for the struggles endured and for dedicating your life into providing them an opportunity to ease their pain and to have helped them live and die pain -free, in peace and with dignity.

Interviewed by Dr. Aiswarya V Namboodiri, Family Medicine Specialist, KIMS Health Trivandrum.

Book Review: The Surgeon's Daughter

by Audrey Blake



Dr. Zarin Pilakadavath
Specialist Family Physician
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The Surgeon's Daughter is a captivating historical novel that skillfully weaves medical history, women's struggles, and human drama into an engrossing narrative. Set in the late 19th century, the book follows Nora Beady, an ambitious young woman navigating the patriarchal world of medicine. This sequel to *The Girl in His Shadow* continues Nora's journey as she strives to establish herself as one of the first female surgeons, battling societal prejudice and institutional barriers that threaten to silence her brilliance.

Nora Beady, once an orphan who found refuge in the home of Dr. Horace Croft, has grown into a determined and exceptionally talented physician. Under Croft's mentorship, she flourished, but London's rigid medical institutions remained unwilling to accept a woman in their ranks. When Croft and Nora travel to Bologna, Italy, Nora finally sees an opportunity: the University of Bologna, one of the oldest in Europe that offers the possibility of formal medical training. In Italy, Nora immerses herself in rigorous surgical education, fueled by her fascination with obstetrics and the possibility of safer childbirth. Her talent shines, but her gender constantly invites scrutiny, ridicule, and rejection. She faces whispered taunts from classmates, condescension from professors, and the ever-present reminder that her very presence in the lecture hall is an anomaly. As Nora begins to innovate surgical techniques, particularly in the realm of Cesarean sections, her work is both groundbreaking and perilous. At a time when antisepsis was in its infancy and maternal mortality was heartbreakingly high, each

operation was fraught with risk. The novel balances these tense surgical scenes with Nora's personal challenges: the longing for recognition, the emotional weight of patients lost, and the constant struggle to prove that a woman's hands are steady enough to wield a scalpel.

In one stirring passage, Nora is reminded of perseverance through maternal symbolism:

"Never give up your post at the crossroads of life and death. People will say you do not belong there because you are a woman... She screamed in agony to bring God into the world and screamed in agony when he was torn from it. She kept her post."

The Surgeon's Daughter is a meditation on resilience and courage in the face of systemic exclusion. Nora's battle is not only against disease and medical ignorance but also against entrenched gender roles. The medical profession, painted vividly in Blake's narrative, is a men's club; hostile to women and suspicious of innovation. Yet Nora's persistence, fueled by both passion and empathy, keeps her moving forward. The novel also explores the human side of medicine. Blake does not shy away from portraying the stark realities of 19th-century surgery: the lack of reliable anesthesia, the constant specter of infection, and the heavy burden of trial and error on patients' lives. Yet she balances these grim details with the tenderness of Nora's commitment to her patients, emphasizing medicine not just as a science but as a calling rooted in compassion. Nora embodies the countless women whose brilliance was stifled by patriarchal structures, yet her story is one of hope. Her journey speaks to the broader struggle for women's rights, education, and professional recognition, a struggle that resonates even today.

Another resonant moment comes in Nora's conviction of medicine's sacred role:

"To stand at the gate of life and death is a calling,

Book Review: The Surgeon's Daughter by Audrey Blake

not a profession. If you accept the call, you will live where joy meets misery.

Nora Beady is depicted with depth and authenticity. She is neither a flawless heroine nor a stereotypical trailblazer. Instead, she is portrayed as a complex woman who doubts, fears, and occasionally falters, yet always returns to her purpose. Her resilience is inspiring, but her vulnerability makes her relatable. Readers feel her frustration when dismissed by colleagues, her grief at losing patients, and her exhilaration when her daring surgical experiments succeed. Dr. Horace Croft serves as both mentor and father figure. His eccentric brilliance contrasts with Nora's quiet determination, creating a dynamic relationship that grounds the novel emotionally. Secondary characters ranging from skeptical professors to fellow medical students flesh out the landscape of prejudice and occasional solidarity.

Surgical procedures are described with clarity, enough to create suspense without alienating readers unfamiliar with medical jargon. Historical settings of Victorian London and Bologna are painted with rich sensory detail, immersing the reader in both the grandeur of European lecture halls and the grim realities of crowded hospital wards. The pacing is measured but engaging. The novel alternates between tense surgical scenes and quieter, introspective passages, creating a rhythm that mirrors Nora's own life: moments of high-stakes drama punctuated by long stretches of perseverance and study.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its meticulous historical research. The author clearly did extensive work to capture the medical practices, social attitudes, and cultural norms of the era. The novel feels authentic without being pedantic. Another strength is the emotional resonance. While the novel is undoubtedly about medicine, it is also about human connection;

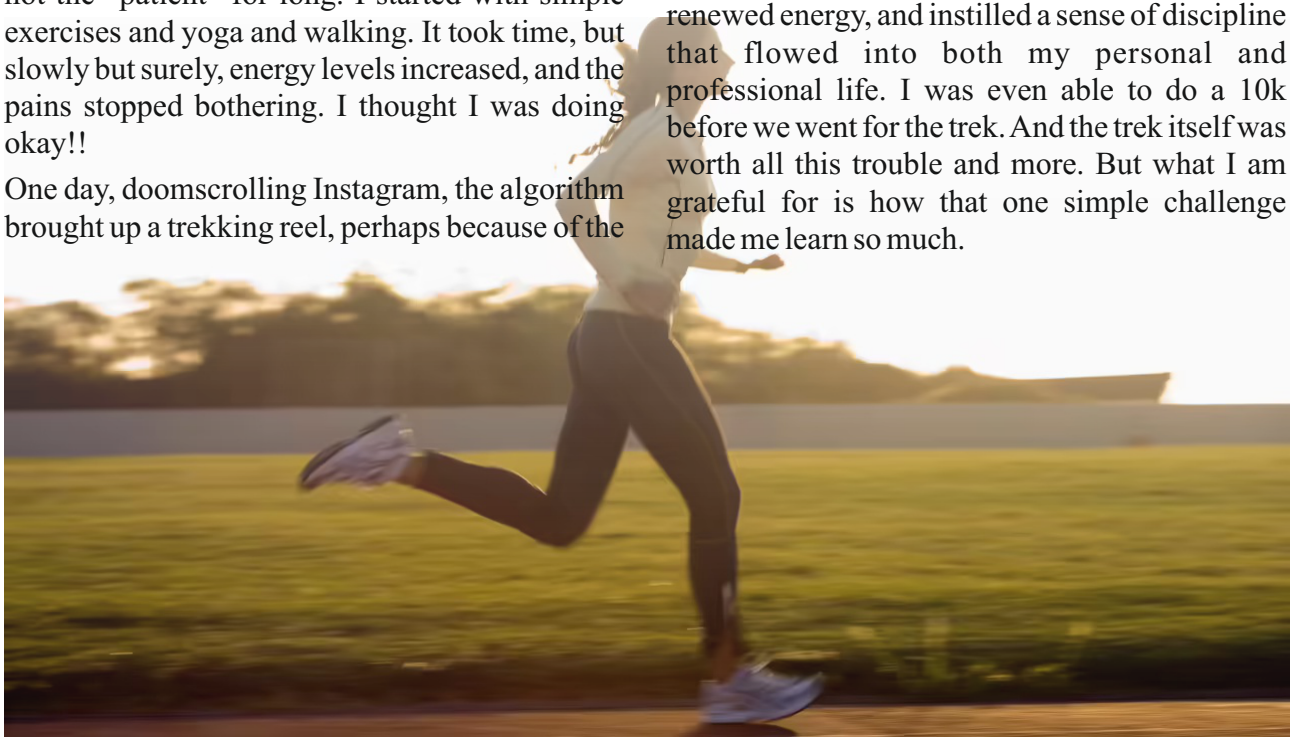
between teacher and student, doctor and patient, woman and society. Readers are left not only with admiration for Nora's surgical skill but also with empathy for her personal sacrifices. The Surgeon's Daughter is a historical fiction as well as an ode to the women who fought for their place in medicine, often at great personal cost. Through Nora Beady, Audrey Blake brings to life a character who is both a product of her time and a figure who transcends it. The novel shines as both a gripping story of surgical innovation and a moving portrait of a woman determined to heal, learn, and lead in a world unwilling to accept her. For readers who enjoy a blend of medical history, strong female protagonists, and evocative storytelling, The Surgeon's Daughter is a powerful and memorable read. The book reminds us that every advance in medicine is not just a scientific milestone but also a human story of persistence, sacrifice, and hope.

One interesting note: author Audrey Blake doesn't actually exist. Audrey Blake is a pseudonym for two women writers who met online but live 1500 miles apart. Authors Regina Sirois, who lives in Kansas, and Jaima Fixsen of Alberta, Canada partnered in creating the Nora Beady series.



One day, doomscrolling Instagram, the algorithm brought up a trekking reel, perhaps because of the

The transformation it brought was remarkable. Running was no longer just about exercise. It became a form of moving meditation, a way to clear my thoughts. It improved my sleep, gave me renewed energy, and instilled a sense of discipline that flowed into both my personal and professional life. I was even able to do a 10k before we went for the trek. And the trek itself was worth all this trouble and more. But what I am grateful for is how that one simple challenge made me learn so much.



I realized that even as a trained family physician, I had little to no idea on the nuances of fitness. Medicine teaches us to prescribe exercise, but not to practice it. When our patients ask us for guidance, we refer them to the physiotherapists or gyms. Even the most motivated patients struggle to keep up with exercise because they do not get proper guidance. Those who run keep running, those who go to the gym keep doing that. But the balanced fitness, which incorporates strength, endurance, balance and flexibility is seldom talked about.

Perhaps, running has made me a better physician. Experiencing firsthand the struggles of habit formation, from sore muscles to skipped runs, gave me a new empathy for my patients. I began to understand more deeply that motivation will always ebb and flow, but what truly sustains change is consistency, small achievable goals, and a supportive environment.

This personal journey also reshaped the way I speak to patients. Instead of simply saying, “*You need to exercise more,*” I now encourage them to start with activities they enjoy, to set realistic milestones, and to track their progress. Sharing my own story often helps patients see that lifestyle change is possible, even when the first steps feel difficult.

Running has also given me a clearer perspective on longevity. As physicians, we often focus on preventing disease. But longevity is not just about avoiding illness, it is about building capacity. Fitness markers like endurance, muscle strength, and resilience are as important as lab reports when it comes to quality of life in later years. Running has taught me that longevity means not only adding years to life, but life to years with strength, vitality, and independence.

As family physicians, we are uniquely placed to guide our patients on this path. Our patients look to us not just for advice, but for inspiration. Perhaps the most powerful way we can inspire them is by walking or running that path ourselves.

DELUGE: LAMENT OF OUR MOTHER

Enough!
Feet callused, bled,
No less, my mind mangled,
Yet they pain so much more, these queries,
Can I bear anymore,
As they loot me, my core?

Love,
Unbridled 'nd pure, Joyous,
these babies I led,
Nursed with all the treasure,
My bosom held; sans measure!

Delighted Mother,
I shared; everything , my all,
Beauty, Riches, deep with in my soul,
Gems adorned once my core,
Immaculate brooks, now alore.

Eyes burn, I reminisce,
As my blood grew and coalesce,
Into my nemesis,
'nd inch by inch, They bleed, drain,
As I flinch.

Tears flow forth, now a deluge,
Devouring all, none spared refuge,
As waters swell from walled- in well,
I once held and now spent,
I , your mother, will ask ever,
Will you, my beloved, learn never?



Dr. Mathews Marian Mathews MI
Consultant Family Physician
Sneha Charitable Trust, Bengaluru



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Learning and Lounging in Lisboa

By Team AFPI Kerala

Our trip to Portugal for the WONCA World Conference 2025 in Lisbon was not just a conference visit. It was a journey that combined learning, exploration, and friendship in the most memorable way.

We started from home on 13th September and returned on 22nd September early morning, carrying with us not only conference materials but also countless memories.

The Venue and the Conference

The venue for the conference was the Lisboa Congress Centre, a huge place with 18 parallel halls and more than 4000 delegates from across the world. Walking through the busy corridors itself was an experience, with sessions happening in every corner.

We attended many academic events—plenary sessions, workshops, and symposiums—on topics ranging from primary care innovations to community health and global health systems. It was inspiring to see how much family medicine is evolving across countries.

The opening ceremony was colorful and grand. The medical students of Lisbon performed beautifully, and the hall was filled with music and energy. One of the most heart-touching moments was meeting Dr. Viviana, the newly installed WONCA President, at the venue. She warmly remembered us and spoke about the energy and enthusiasm of AFPI during the WONCA SAR Conference hosted by AFPI in April 2025. Hearing those words made us feel proud and deeply connected.

Our own Kerala team proudly conducted a workshop on “Home Care and Geriatric Assessment”, which was well received. A prestigious moment for us came when our teammate Dr. Vishnu was selected as the WONCA SAR YDM Chair, bringing great pride to AFPI Kerala.

We also met many leaders and colleagues from the region. It was a pleasure to connect with Dr. Pramendra Prasad, Regional Chairman WONCA

SAR, Dr. Sankha, WONCA SAR Secretary from Sri Lanka, and Dr. Vandana Boobna, AFPI National Vice President. On 20th September, an informal regional gathering at the venue gave us a chance to exchange ideas and strengthen bonds.

Our Team and Our Home in Lisbon



Our Kerala delegation included Dr. Resmi S. Kaimal, Dr. Serin Kuriakose, Dr. Nadeem Abootty, Dr. Mansoor P. M, and Dr. Vishnu B. S, along with Mrs. Praveena (wife of Dr. Serin) and their daughter Thea. Together, we stayed in a flat at R. Do Cruzeiro 20. That flat soon became our home of happiness.

Cooking meals together was one of the highlights. The aroma of Kerala spices mixing with the cool Lisbon breeze made us feel at home. One night, while enjoying Ghee rice with Tuna curry and egg fry someone joked, “We are in Europe, but our stomachs are still in Kerala.” Evenings often ended with old hit movies playing on the TV, while little Thea ran around filling the home with laughter.

Exploring Lisbon and Beyond

Lisbon itself had so much to offer. We spent time at Belém, admiring the iconic Belém Tower and

Learning and Lounging in Lisboa

By Team AFPI Kerala

the grand Jerónimos Monastery. No visit was complete without tasting the famous Pastel de Nata, a creamy custard tart that Lisbon is known for.

We also enjoyed simple yet delicious sardines, tuna sandwiches, and piña coladas, which gave us a taste of Portugal's culinary charm.

We also crossed the river to Almada, visiting the towering Christ the Redeemer statue, which offered a breathtaking view of Lisbon across the bridge. Standing there, with the city and the Tagus River spread out before us, was a truly peaceful experience.

Beyond Lisbon, our travels were adventurous. We used every mode of transport—metro, train, bus, Uber, and even GIRA bikes along the Corniche. One of the boldest adventures was our one-day trip to Porto, 320 km away. Dr. Serin bravely rented a car and drove us all the way. “We will make it in time,” he said confidently, and he was right. At Porto, we visited the Douro riverside, admired the famous tiles of São Bento Station, took the cable car ride, and stood amazed at the view from the Dom Luís I Bridge. It was a tiring but unforgettable day.

Our trip to Sintra felt like a fairytale. With the help of our guide Marcos, we explored the colorful Pena Palace, the majestic Moorish Castle, and the mystical Quinta da Regaleira. We also visited Cabo da Roca, the westernmost point of Europe, where the ocean stretched endlessly before us. On the way back, we spent some relaxing time at Cascais, enjoying the sea breeze and the coastal charm.

Memories Beyond Borders

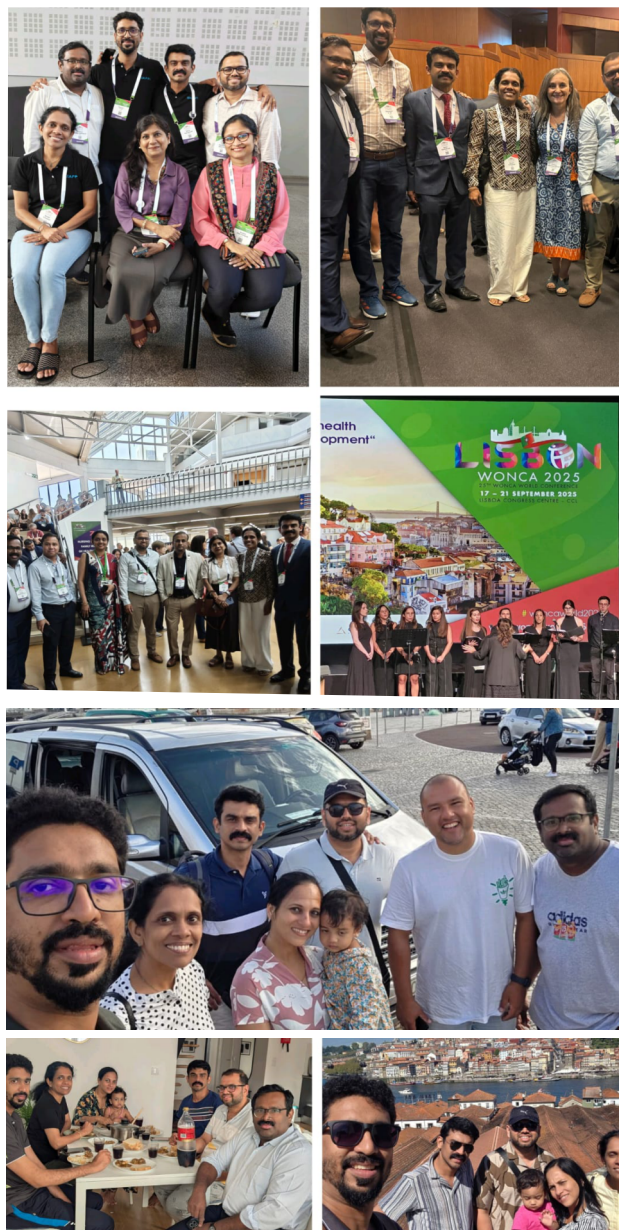
Looking back, what made this trip special was not just the conference sessions or the tourist spots—it was the bond we shared as a team. Cooking together, laughing over movies, exploring new cities, and supporting each other during busy days made us feel more like a family than colleagues.

Thea's innocent joy, Praveena's delicious meals,

and the care and warmth of every team member turned a professional trip into a lifetime memory.

Coming Home Inspired

We returned to Kerala with fresh ideas for family medicine, stronger international connections, and hearts full of joy. WONCA 2025 was a true celebration of learning, leadership, and togetherness. For all of us, Portugal will always be remembered as the land where we represented AFPI with pride, lived like a family, and created memories to last forever.





Everyday in clinic and wards, we focus on everyone else's wellbeing and forget to tend to our own. Stacked schedules and split – second choices steadily drain stamina , yet holistic health doesnt always hinge on grand gestures. A few purposeful, mindful pauses can steer us back on course.

Micro - breaks integrate seamlessly into the day - 2 to 3 intentional, technology -free minutes in between patient visits or in replies to emails can reset nervous system and recharge decision - making capacity. Research has shown that during the times we don't think, we establish focus and diminish the brazenly insidious slope of burnout.

A 30 second stretch: Stand, reach overhead, and roll each shoulder in gentle circles. This movement helps loosen up the stiff areas of your body that get tight from sitting at a desk or bedside for long hours.

Tempt a moment of micro- mindfulness: Let the screen's glow dim in your periphery. Gaze gently at some static texture, taste tongue in mouth, and count five rounds of unhurried inhalation. Breathe in before arriving back to the next task, a fresh.

Fragmenting the day with brief purposeful pauses sharpens focus, eases tension, and brings gentleness into our conversations with patients. Over weeks and months, these tiny tides of stillness lift career fulfillment and personal health.

We tell our patients that prevention is transformative, yet we bypass that wisdom ourselves. Genuine care is not found in distant sabbaticals; it rises with a two minute grounding ritual countering a relentless OPD rhythm. A micro break is no admission of fatigue, it is a deliberate infusion of steadiness, compassion and productivity – keeping us fully present from morning hand- over through the final evening note.





Paintings By
Dr. Minerva Merlitta





Snap Gallery - Photography by

Dr. Mohamed Muhsin

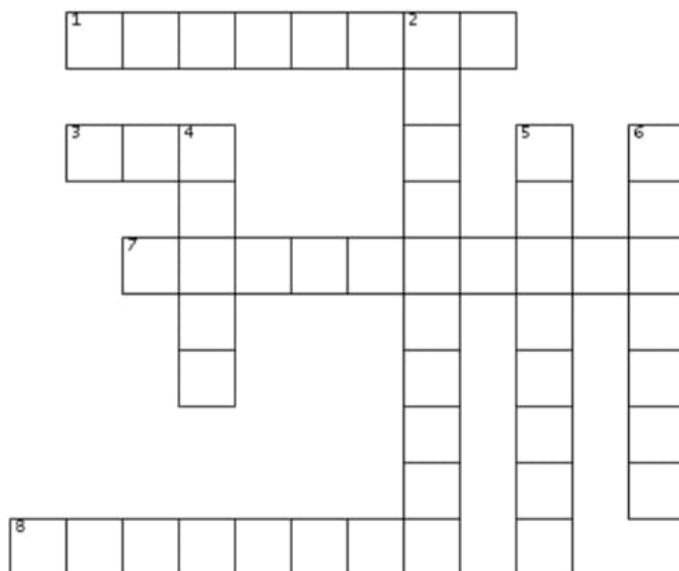
Family Medicine Resident
Kimshealth Trivandrum





Dr. Ebin P Raj
Family medicine resident
KIMSHealth Trivandrum.

QUIZ



Across

1. New long-acting insulin for type 2 diabetes.
3. Tool to assess depression severity in primary care.
7. Oral drug for COPD maintenance therapy.
8. Drug for chronic migraine prevention.

Down

2. Drug used for hypercholesterolemia (PCSK9 inhibitor).
4. Risk calculator for heart disease in adults.
5. Vaccine recommended for adults to prevent shingles.
6. Handheld device for hemoglobin measurement in clinics.



UPCOMING EVENTS



**10th ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE
AFPI KERALA
AFPICON KERALA
2026**

**Registration
OPEN**

31/01/2026 & 01/02/2026
Contour Backwaters Hotel Resort &
Convention Centre, Changanassery, Kottayam

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THE SPICE ROUTE
AFPI



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