An Overview

The Institute of Health Systems (IHS) Hyderabad, established in 1990 is a premier public health research and training institution. The Indian economy allocates about 6% of its GDP to the health sector, which is more than the average for countries with similar GDP levels. Also, India has a very large medical technical manpower base with skills that are comparable to the best in the world. Yet, we manage to live with, rather suffer from, very poor health care delivery systems. Such a scenario has come about mainly because the health services have been viewed as a technological affair. There are a lot of areas in the health care delivery system which cannot be handled with the help of traditional medical technology that our health staff are equipped with. A group of concerned citizens realized that the situation could be improved by building capacity in health systems research and health policy analysis, training people in interdisciplinary skills, developing quality assurance and accreditation systems for health care organizations, and encouraging and trying social experiments to build new institutional mechanisms of health care delivery. It was in this background that the IHS was established in December 1990 by professionals from multiple disciplines, all concerned about improvement of the health systems. The Institute aspires to improve the efficacy, quality, and equity of the Indian health care system.

Hill Fort road entrance of the Institute

The IHS is a member of the National Consortium of Training Institutions in Community Health (NCTICH) organised by National Institute of Health & Family Welfare (NIHFW). The Institute is recognised by the NTR University of Health Sciences, for practical training of MD(SPM) students, and is affiliated
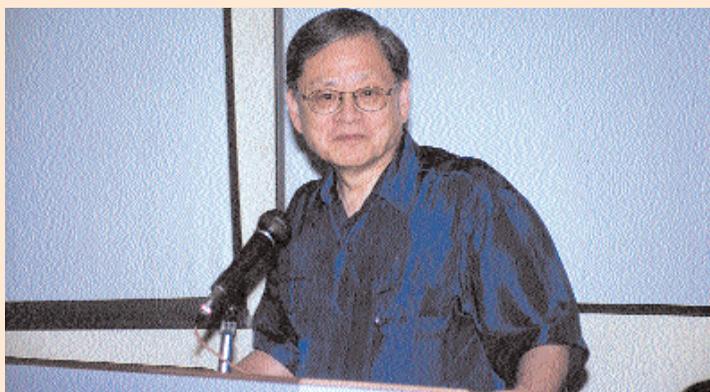
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health system to share and learn from the insights of top class intellectuals and public health analysts. The Institute arranges public health lectures, whenever there is an opportunity of having the time from reputed health system researchers and health policy analysts. The public health lectures are open to any one interested in the subject. Admission is free.

Prof. William Hsiao, Harvard School of Public Health, Delivering a lecture on "Social or Private Health Insurance for India" on 04th of May, 2000

People are gradually recognising the bibliographic niche being cultivated by the IHS library. Although the library is small, it has some collections in the area of health economics, health system research etc. not easily available elsewhere in Hyderabad. As of December 2001, the Institute had 37 associate members, mostly taken to access the library facility. The library services about 323 retrievals per month. The Institute, as a matter of principle, publishes all its research and consultancy outputs through working papers, reports, datasets, or monographs. These publications are available to public for a nominal price, to cover cost of publication. List of IHS publications are provided in the IHS capacity statement, which is updated from time to time as well as through the Institute's web site. Publications can be obtained personally from the Institute's Front Office or by writing to the Communications and Services Officer.

The Institute maintains a database of health care institutions in Andhra Pradesh, called the APHIDB. It includes public and private health care institutions. The database is accessible to health system researchers and members of public to facilitate health system research and public policy debate.

For more details

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The Institute of Health Systems

Our Mission : Groom Skills, Gather Evidence, and Generate Knowledge

Our Goals : Improve Efficacy, Quality and Equity of Health Care Systems

to Andhra Pradesh State Board of Technical Education and Training for conducting course in Health Informatics. The IHS is a member of the HL7 organisation, which is an international professional body for development and use of health informatic standards.

The Institute is governed by a system of authorities consisting of an executive committee, a general body and the Board of governors. Programs and activities of the institute are carried out by a team of faculty and staff lead by the Director, who is the chief academic and Executive Officer of the institute. The Institute is equipped with a core group of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary full time Faculty. These include people from various background including Community Health, Nutrition, Health economics, Social Sciences Health Care Management, Environmental Sciences, Biotechnology, Computer applications, etc. The IHS is registered as a charitable scientific institution under section 12A of the Income Tax Act. Contributions to IHS are eligible for exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act. The Institute has been granted permanent registration by the Government of India, Ministry of Home affairs under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act. Starting with the first meeting held in July 1994 annual general body meetings are conducted ever year, around December - January. IHS files its audited accounts with the Income Tax department every year. Annual reports are filed with the registrar of societies and are accessible to public through the registrar of documents. In addition the annual reports, and audited accounts of the Institute are made available, along with other publications of the institute, to interested persons for a small charge. Membership of the institute is open to any person who has consistently evinced interest and demonstrated commitment towards objectives of the institute and to institutions with complementary objectives.

IHS mission is to groom skills, gather evidence, and generate knowledge to improve efficacy, quality and equity of health care systems. The Institute has sought to work towards this goal on a self financing basis. There are four areas of activity, namely; (a) research and consultancy, (b) training (c) health informatics and (d) public services.

Research and Consultancy
National Burden of Disease (NBD):

The Andhra Pradesh Burden of Disease (APBD) Study was started by the institute in 1993, immediately after publication of the Global Burden of Disease Study results in the World Bank's World Development Report, 1993). Since then the Institute has pursued many connected areas of research to build

Health informatics - Computer laboratory

Following is a brief overview of some of the software products being developed at the Institute.

1. BDAP (Burden of Disease Application Project): It is developed to allow epidemiologists and demographers to estimate disease burden for a given population. The application was commissioned by the World Health Organization.

2. PRISM (Processing Research Information System for Mortality data): It allows for entry of cause of death reports and provides services for review of individual reports by trained personnel, tabulation of data and generation of statistical reports.

3. HiMan-2000 (Health Information Manager - 2000): it is an application to log hospital statistics, admission and discharge data and send them across a wide area network, using HL 7 compliant messaging format.

4. HiMan Central (Health Information Manager - Central): It is the central server application that receives periodical reports from individual hospitals and allows for generation of management information system at the head office.

Public Services

One of the goals of the Institute of Health Systems (IHS) is to build local capacity for generation and use of evidence and information for health policy to realize the broader goal of overall socioeconomic development. Usage of evidence and information for policy is to predicate on awareness by general public and knowledge among the public health community, of results from health system and related studies. Towards this end, the IHS has been striving to provide opportunity to persons interested in improvement of the Andhra Pradesh

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laboratories have been trained in National Burden of Disease Study methodology.

3. A suite of programs on various aspects of cause of death coding and research has been developed to meet the needs of different people involved in generation of cause of death statistics. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has identified the IHS to organise workshops on cause of death research methodology for its scientists.

An advanced study programme in public health will be offered by the Institute by end 2002. This 2 year course will prepare experts in Health System Research, Health & Social work. Graduating students from this course will manage community health care, non-profit health care institutions.

Health Informatics

The Institute has been making concerted efforts to build the health informatics infrastructure (HII) in India. Major HII activities of the Institute are (a) human resource development for health informatics, (b) health informatic standards, and (c) health care identification systems.

To build skilled manpower for health informatics, IHS runs three different kinds of training programs such as system administration, health care software development and personal computing skills for health care professionals. The certificate course on Health Intranet System Administration (CHISA) covers personal computer hardware, networking essentials, network operating system, introduction to health care institutions, problem solving skills, and personality development. The certificate course in health care software development (HCSD) is designed to develop domain knowledge in health care field among computer software engineers. Participants in the course learn about health informatic standards like the Health Level Seven (HL7), general functioning of health care institutions from the information system perspective and various types of health informatic solutions. The Institute incorporates a personal computing component in all its training programmes and takes up fully dedicated training courses in use of personal computers by health care professionals.

IHS has recently adopted a regulation for setting up a health care identifier (HCId) system, which will be an useful infrastructure for electronic transfer of information between health care and related institutions. The Institute also develops soft ware to meet needs of health system research.

national capacity in quantification of disease burden. These include studies on; (a) causes of death, (b) health status measurement, (c) indirect estimation of mortality (d) small area analysis of mortality, and (e) descriptive epidemiology.

Dr.C.Rangarajan, Governor of Andhra Pradesh and Dr.N.Janardhan Reddy, Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of A.P. looking at the poster presentation on IHS research activities on 07-04-2002.

Health System Performance Assessment (HSP):

Improving efficacy of health systems through operations research and performance assessment is one of the important missions of the Institute. Keeping with this mission, the Institute has fostered many research in areas such as (a) periodic analysis of hospital performance, (b) patient satisfaction surveys, (c) responsiveness surveys, and (d) national health accounts.

A.P. Health System Responsiveness Survey

Following are a sample of recent work at the IHS in this area.

1. Patient Satisfaction Surveys in APVVP Hospitals. Five surveys done so far, starting with the first survey in 1999 and subsequent surveys at six month intervals.

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2. Health System Responsiveness Survey in A.P.

3. Data Validation and Hospital Performance Analysis for Maharashtra Health Systems Development Project.

Health Sector Reform:

The Strategy Development Workshop on Health Sector Reforms in Andhra Pradesh held at the Institute.

Health sector reform is a sustained process of fundamental change in policies and institutional arrangements of the health sector, usually guided by the government. Any meaningful reform process ought to be based on evidence and information about the current state of affairs, and potential effect of alternative policy choices. Many of the Institute's research activities take place with the objective of generating evidence and information for health policy. For example;

1. The Strategy Development Workshop for Health Sector reform in Andhra Pradesh, April 24-25, 2001.

2. A study on the Structure and dynamics of Private Health Sector in Andhra Pradesh, 1999-2000.

3. Reproductive Health Services and Health Sector Reform. Focus Group Discussions with ANMs in Andhra Pradesh, 2001.

4. PHC Medical Officers Workshop on Reproductive Health Services and Health Sector Reform in Andhra Pradesh, 2002.

Healthcare Quality Assurance (HQA):

To develop national capacity in health care quality assurance, the Institute has built up a collection literature about accreditation systems in other parts of the world. During the course of a recent study on the structure and dynamics of the private health sector in AP, the Institute has developed a framework for assessment of health care quality. Some of the Institute's faculty have had first hand exposure to the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Health Care Organisations (JCAHO) in USA.

Training Services

The IHS is developing academic programs and offering training services to build interdisciplinary skills for more efficient health system. Public health related training services fall broadly into two groups namely, (a) health system operation, and (b) health system research methodology. In addition, the Institute organises training programs in health informatics, which is described later.

Valedictory of the National Burden of Disease estimation workshop for ICMR Scientists, December, 2001

Following is a selection of training programs conducted by the IHS.

1. Managing Primary Health Care in Remote Areas (MPHCR) designed specifically to benefit medical officers, ITDA officials, PHC Extension officers in Tribal Areas. This two week program builds skills in organisational behaviour, public administration, rapid assessment of health situation, program management, monitoring and evaluation, accounting and financial management, working with tribal communities, disciplinary procedures, conduct rules, and office procedures.

2. The IHS is the only centre in the South and East Asian region with substantial expertise in national burden of disease studies. Recognising this, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) chose the Institute to train its scientists in burden of disease study methodology and research on causes of death. Two batches of scientists from various ICMR