

FOGSI's Role in Reproductive and Child Health Care.

D.K. Tank

Ambika Darshan, M. G. Road, Ghatkopar, Mumbai 400 077.



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Summary

It is now the consensus of all organizations of obstetricians & gynaecologists that the care of the reproductive health of the woman is the primary responsibility of obstetricians and gynaecologists. The Government of India has an excellent network for providing health care. It has achieved good results in the last few years. However much remains to be done both in terms of women's health and coverage of eligible couples for contraception. FOGSI in 1997 thought that if there is an unison of the State and Central Governments, NGO's like the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and others, the goal could be achieved with greater ease. The author was asked by the FOGSI to implement this concept. The article below gives a detailed account of the achievements so far and the direction which future works will take. We hope to keep the issue on every FOGSI members mind and their thoughts are welcome.

Introduction

In the glare of hi tech advances, sometimes, the basic requirements of the region where we live in get obscured. FOGSI (Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India) strongly felt the need to address these basic requirements of our region with all

the resources available.

FOGSI is the prime organization for the care of the mother and child in our country. FOGSI has a membership of 14,000 specialists in the science of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The best technology and know-how is available at a few centres in our country. Their results are comparable to those of elite centres in the developed world. FOGSI has been contributing for safe motherhood in studying the causes and prevention of maternal death.

FOGSI resolved in the year 1997 to contribute with all its might to improve the problem of the extremely poor status of providing health care to the women of India. The subject of Reproductive Health Care to Women includes Safe Motherhood, Family Welfare, Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and the Downstaging of Malignant disorders of the genital tract.

We are fully aware of our limited resources as our organization is nurtured by contributions of membership fees. We conceived the idea of having the Reproductive Health Care Fund, where the FOGSI members contribute voluntarily and so many of you have done it very generously; the largest donation of Rs 10 lakhs was received unconditionally from our Past President and revered teacher, Dr. C G Saraiya.

We planned to implement our concepts both in terms of finances and infrastructure by the collaboration of FOGSI with the Government of India — Department of Health and Family Welfare and NGOs (Non Government Organizations) like the UNICEF and WHO. The Government of India has an excellent network for providing health care. It has achieved good results in the last few years. However much remains to be done both in terms of women's health and coverage of eligible couples for contraception. I am greatly pleased to inform you that we have been successful in achieving the unison of these three organizations in these last two years.

It all started with the declaration of the year 1997 as the "Breast Feeding Promotion Year. 1997". The unprecedented and enthusiastic response the program received from the members and the sincerity with which we executed the program impressed the UNICEF and the Government. This led to our goal of chief concern i.e. working on the Reproductive Health Care.

The initial strategies towards achieving this goal are:

1. Having workshops on appraisal of RCH issues. The workshop methodology has been promoted to us by the Asia Oceania Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (AOFOG) and UNICEF.
2. The concept of having a practicing Gynaecologist as First Referral Unit (FRU) consultant at all the FRUs, all over the country akin to the earlier existing Honorary system.
3. Providing safe Medical Termination of Pregnancy at Primary Health Centres (PHC).
4. Promoting subjects of great relevance to Reproductive Health Care by making them FOGSI annual themes like "Breast Feeding Promotion Year 1997", "FOGSI year of the Adolescent Girl — 1999. Education and Empowerment"

Workshops on RCH

This serves the purpose of educating the Gynaecologists and Health Care Providers both in private sector and government service sector on the subject of RCH. We have been able to conduct 32 such Workshops all over the country and FOGSI has received huge, never-before finances of Rs 60 lakhs from the Government of India — Department of Health and Family Welfare, UNICEF and AOFOG. Each Workshop has been financed to the extent of US\$ 5000. FIGO (Federation Internationale Obstetrics et Gynecologie) has also come forward and sponsored one workshop. The project of conducting these 32 Workshops has already been completed with a very encouraging response. The areas

chosen are the ones with the highest of maternal mortality rates and which required maximum coverage by the Family Welfare Program.

All FRU Consultant Project

The two major elements for a successful RCH program are providing Emergency Obstetric Care at the FRU level and the continued education of all health workers at the grass root and FRU levels on essential obstetrics and gynecological services. To achieve this two pronged objective, the Government of India, along with the UNICEF and WHO are upgrading FRUs to make them capable of rendering Emergency Obstetric Care to the level of being able to perform operative interventions like a Caesarean Section there. FOGSI members practicing in the area of the FRU will be the Consultant Obstetricians there. This is not a one sided affair, this will also be a boost for the Obstetricians who will be appointed to the FRUs.

The Governments of Maharashtra and Gujrat have issued orders for the appointments where the private practitioner Obstetrician who is a member of FOGSI could work for 3 hours, 3 times a week. The honorarium is Rs 2000. They will be paid Rs 500 for major operations and Rs 200 for minor procedures over and above the honorarium for emergency work. There is a provision of two FRU consultants at each level. The purpose is to provide Emergency Care to the less privileged. The Government of India has accepted this concept of FOGSI, and has informed all the States accordingly. We are working to achieve it in all the states. We expect that as this program takes hold, these posts will be fiercely competed for and indeed coveted.

Providing Safe Medical Termination of Pregnancy at Primary Health Centres

A practicing Gynaecologist could visit a Primary Health Centre, which is equipped, and perform MTP. The honorarium paid will be Rs 500 per visit.

FOGSI members will have the same immunity and privileges under the Consumer Protection Act as are available to Government Doctors while working in the

Government institutions/premises.

Annual Projects

The breast feeding promotion year in 1997 was a great success and Dr Mehroo Hansotia, President of FOGSI for the year 1999 with dynamism and hard work has put in great effort on promoting the important issues of the care of the Adolescent Girl. Her emphasis has been all around and especially on the Education and Empowerment of the Adolescent Girl. She took it up and made a great impact on this vital issue of RCH.

Dr. Alokendu Chatterjee President who has been devout to the cause of women's health has kept the theme for the year "Women's health — our commitment" FOGSI's theme for 2000.

The urban under privileged have not been missed

out and we are in the process of planning how their best interests in Reproductive Health Care could be served.

Acceptance Of FOGSI On The Consultative Bodies

The President and few of the office bearers of FOGSI are being invited on the consultative committee by the Health Minister — Government of India for the discussion of the implementation of the Population policy 2000.

The Prime Minister of India is the chairman of the committee on the population control for the country and the president of FOGSI is invited to be the member of this important committee.