

# CANADA-INDIA NETWORKING INITIATIVE 2018 (CINI 2018)

## THE MAGIC & SUCCESS

By Dr. Arun K. Garg & Dr. Suman Kolipara

**R**arely do we get to see two nations coming together with a common goal and virtually working towards a shared vision of creating a healthy civil society. This mammoth task was achieved through CINI 2018 with links between Canada and India through patient engagement, innovation and technology.

Canada India Network Initiative (CINI), which is held every four years bringing the best of the both worlds together, not just in health care but reaching to the level of the policy makers, politicians, administrators, research scientists, technology experts, as well as experts in ancient wisdom practices, like yoga, meditation and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM).

The conference was held at Simon Fraser University in the City of Surrey, which is a melting pot of cultures, languages and mindsets. The conference was spread across four days from June 8 till June 11, with different mediums of sharing, and disseminating knowledge and wisdom from across the globe.

The opening ceremonies saw the cream of the world come together under one umbrella in the Surrey City Hall chambers, which were co-hosted in partnership with the City of Surrey. The

evening was filled with a unique fragrance of elegant personalities from within the Lower Mainland and across the globe.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of Lifetime Achievement Awards to achievers, builders, connectors, dreamers, healers and the leaders in the field of health care. The awards were presented to some of the most eminent personalities who have contributed immensely and selflessly to the human wellness in many dimensions. The nine noble change makers who were honoured are Dr. Prathap Reddy, Dr. Arvind Lal, Dr. Gurdev Gill, Dr. Devendra Goel, Dr. Asha Seth, Dr. Simon Sutcliffe, Dr. Gulzar Cheema, Dr. Michael Allard and Dr. Arun Chockalingam.

The evening also saw some esteemed dignitaries, like President and CEO of Fraser Health at the time of conference — Michael Marchbank (currently retired), Consul General of India — Her Excellency Abhilasha Joshi and City of Surrey Mayor — Linda Hepner.

The conference was officially opened on June 9, with welcome remarks from Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, Government of British Columbia and Dr. Arun Garg, the Conference Chair.

The message was clear and loud from the beginning — war on diabetes is the need of the hour.

There were some outstanding presentations in this segment, including our own Deljit Bains — who is the leader at the South Asian Health Institute — advocating deep transformation in the community through engagement with *gurdwaras*, temples and other social/religious gatherings. Dr. Gulzar Cheema, former Minister with the BC Government, also shared his work on ICON — Intercultural Online Health Network — a community-driven health promotion initiative that supports multicultural communities, patients and caregivers across BC to optimize chronic disease prevention and self-management. The focus of the sessions in this segment was also on the other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and different preventative strategies that are taking place in India, as well as Canada.

The mood of the conference started to shift from a waging war on diabetes on one side of the spectrum to making peace with the mind on the other side. Mental illness, the silent killer of modern times, has definitely emerged as the hottest topic of the conference. It definitely broke the silence of the participants,



audience and the officials in the Fraser Health and government as the presentation on substance abuse and related disorders by Dr. Nitasha Puri rolled in, which was about the need for immediate action in prevention and cure of the crisis and her work with Roshni Clinic. Presentation by Dr. Suman Kollipara focused on alternative and integrated approaches, like meditation and self-empowerment tools, in the prevention of mental illness through the vision of “educate, experience and enlighten,” which drew a lot of attention as a way to not only prevent mental illness but as a therapeutic intervention in healing many of the illnesses. The discussions that followed stirred many aspects of mental illness, which was summarized and collaborated by Dr. Anson Koo — Program Medical Director and Regional Department Head, Fraser Health MHSU (Mental Health and Substance Use) and Dr. Victoria Lee — then Chief Medical Health Officer and Vice-President, Population Health in the Fraser Health region of BC (currently President and CEO, Fraser Health). The session about public health approaches to palliative care in India and BC with regards to the work done by Two Worlds Cancer Collaboration

was presented by Dr. Doris Barwich and Dr. Gillian Fyles. The discussions were facilitated by Dr. Simon Sutcliffe and Dr. Bob de Faye. The importance of palliative care cannot be ignored, which is on a rise with the cases of cancer impacting every single family in one way or the other. Kudos to advocates like them who have been steering the palliative care selflessly at the grassroots across the globe, especially to the needy who cannot afford terminal care in the complex treatment of cancer.

The sessions on leadership in health triggered stimulating discussions from both sides of the planet with eminent speakers, like Dr. Arvind Lal, Dr. Anupam Sibal and Dr. Robert Woollard, who brought decades of their experience in shedding light on the need for better practices in health care from top to down. The need for empowering physicians was presented through a very scientific LEADS framework, with simple principles of “Lead Self, Engage Others, Achieve Results, Develop Coalitions and Systems Transformation.” It is interesting and important to note that Dr. Arun Garg and CINI embody these five principle foundations of leadership in their work in building a healthy civil

society. They have become the founding principles in the success of the vision and mission of CINI’s work with the community across the multicultural and multidimensional landscape.

The evening of the second day of the conference ended with a grand banquet dinner at the Royal King Palace and Convention Center in Surrey. This was a one-of-a-kind banquet, with people from all segments of life assembled to celebrate two nations, two cultures and two voices to become one under the roof of CINI. The evening saw all sections of the society come together under one umbrella to celebrate life at its best and to create health in its many dimensions. There were stalwarts from all walks of life, including business, innovations, technology, education, universities, health care, politics, administration, NGOs and change agents from all sectors. It was a celebration of health, happiness, food, music and culture at its best. The entire convention center resonated with national anthems of Canada and India, presentations from the eminent leaders on both sides of the world, which gave a glimpse of richness of Canada and glory of India, as well as the similarities in the democratic power of people of both nations.





The convention was like a festive cruise ship carrying thousands across the sea of humanity to new horizons of friendship, partnership and collaboration. The voices of individuals on the stage, with the thumping standing ovation for the noble work done by Dr. Arun Garg echoed in the air that evening. The colours of both cultures blending to become one were clearly evident with the light that

emanated from the sense of oneness. It was a celebration that heaven would have envied, without doubt. The MCs of the evening, Davin Garg and Angelina from Spice Radio, enthralled and entertained the audience with great sense of humour, while ensuring that everyone was focused on the essence of the program. The performances of classical music and *tabla* from the world-renowned artist duo of

Vancouver, Cassius Khan and Amika Kushwaha, mesmerized and transcended the audience to ancient times of India, with rhythms galvanizing the hearts and beats moving the souls to ecstasy.

The third day of the conference brought an immense variety to the table with two major sessions on integrative medicine and health, as well as technology and innovation in health industry.





With the advent of modernization and innovation, human lifestyle has taken many twists and turns in the past century. Even though the modern medicine has been able to help humanity in dealing with many infectious diseases as well as with critical care, its role has been limited in terms of prevention and care of non-communicable diseases.

In the last two decades, there is an eruption of lifestyle diseases, which has gone out of control.

The damage can be contained, and these can be very well be prevented and cured with wisdom from ancient times. The traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Ayurveda, yoga and aboriginal medicine can play a huge role in not only bridging the gap in treatment and prevention of these illnesses but also bringing into light some of these ancient forms of healing that have stood the test of time. The field of integrative medicine and health had an amazing line up of speakers from medical professionals, research scientists to TCM and yoga practitioners who have reflected on their personal journeys, as well as those of patients that they work with on a day-to-day basis. The presentations included

importance of integrative medicine in the prevention of dementia, supportive cancer care, food as medicine, TCM, aboriginal medicine and integrated yoga therapy by experts in these areas. The message is clear that it's time to integrate these practices with the critical care provided in the hospitals and clinics to help people make the choices when it comes to taking charge of their wellness.

The session on technology and innovation definitely gave a kick to the end of the conference where there were presentations about artificial intelligence in health care, taking action against tuberculosis, role of technology in accessing health information, mobile technologies, as well as using neuroethology in youth depression and addiction. The discussions around these topics brought into limelight the need for integrating innovation and technology into health care for efficient and elegant health systems that can deliver quality care. It was evident that there is no escape from technology, but identifying ways to marry them together so that there is seamless integration for faster and better health care, end to end, is what is needed.

There were also two roundtables that

happened around technology and integrative medicine. Both the roundtables were focused on identifying research opportunities between India and Canada in building bridges for incorporation of modern innovation on one side and ancient technology on the other side.

At the end, it was clear that there is no single path to success, but an amalgamation of various practices, technologies and mindsets will create a collaborative platform for people with different perspectives to come together and work in unison for building a robust future. This approach will benefit generations to come.

CINI 2018 is a reflection of strength in unity, in spite of the diversity in beliefs, cultures and ideas. The biggest take-away from the conference is clear hope that when the minds are clear and hearts are open, miracles can happen and there is no other miracle than the conviction of creating a healthy civil society. Heartfelt thanks to every single individual, volunteer and sponsor who have worked tirelessly to make this conference a mega success, bridging the two nations and a billion hearts into one!



#### **Dr. Arun Kumar Garg**

Dr. Arun Kumar Garg is a global physician with passion for a healthy civil society. His interest and extensive experience allow him to have global practice and engagement. He is also a consultant medical biochemist in Fraser Health, clinical professor of pathology in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of British Columbia, and director of its cooperation and engagement office of global medicine. He also holds adjunct professorship of clinical services in the Faculty of Health Science at Simon Fraser University.

#### **Dr. Suman Kollipara**

Dr. Suman Kollipara is the co-founder of a non-profit organization — Peace Tree Innovations Society ([www.peacetree.ca](http://www.peacetree.ca)), Centre for Wellness and Oneness — that works on grassroot transformation of wellness for conscious transformation of individuals, families and organizations through workshops on personal wellness and global oneness, using self-empowerment tools of ancient wisdom and modern science.