

THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE

IN RURAL INDIA

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IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE IN RURAL INDIA

In 1946, the World Health Organization stated that ‘the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every human being’. Yet, some 70 years later, more than half of the world’s population still do not have access to basic healthcare. Nowhere is this problem more pronounced than in India, where 250 million people do not have access to adequate healthcare.

One of the main reasons for this is that rural India is home to 70 per cent of the population, yet only 3.3 per cent of all trained doctors work in these areas. The training and the facilities these doctors have do not meet the complex needs of the communities they serve. Every year some 55 million people in India are forced into deeper poverty because they have no other option other than to seek private care to meet their health needs.

WHAT ROLE CAN THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE PLAY?

The University of Melbourne’s assistance has been requested by the largest non-government organisation in India, the Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) to further develop their healthcare workforce and to enhance their health systems, to benefit the 30 million people they provide care to annually.

CHAI is primarily based in rural and impoverished areas of India, providing care irrespective of patients’ ability to pay or their caste, religion, gender or sexual orientation. CHAI is deeply committed to providing care to those most in need.

The University is uniquely positioned to address the needs of CHAI by sharing its research capabilities, in-depth knowledge of working with in-country partners, and world-leading expertise in medical education, global health systems and rural and regional health.

This partnership has grown from a shared connection with Doctor Sister Mary Glowrey. In addition to being one of the first women to graduate from the University of Melbourne’s Medical School, Dr Glowrey is also the founder of CHAI. During her lifetime, Dr Glowrey personally treated hundreds of thousands of patients in rural India.

It is in her memory, that the University first established the Sister Mary Glowrey Scholars Program in partnership with CHAI and St Vincent’s Health Australia in 2016. The program supports visiting fellows from India to engage in clinical training, research and leadership courses that will improve the healthcare, mental health and disability support services in rural India.



Dr Mudavath Krishna Nayak administers care to his patient

“The strength of the CHAI network is the numbers, the reach, the grassroots presence and the potential to make a social impact. The partnership with the University of Melbourne will go a long way in leveraging the untapped potential of the CHAI network and workforce.”

FATHER MATHEW
DIRECTOR OF CHAI

THE PROGRAM

The University is proposing to partner with CHAI over a five-year period to undertake the following three initiatives:

1. TRAINING

Provide world-class training in healthcare and clinical knowledge to the trainers and institutional leaders of CHAI who in turn will upskill their fellow healthcare practitioners in rural and marginalised areas:

- Enrol 60 strategically selected healthcare leaders in University short courses.
- Provide field-based training to 300 healthcare practitioners in India.
- Provide scholarships to healthcare leaders to enrol in Doctor of Medicine and Master of Public Health courses at the University of Melbourne.
- Support 10 CHAI leaders to undertake leadership development activities, including courses and events, at the University of Melbourne.

2. PROGRAMS

Establish six applied training programs across the CHAI network to address areas of specific need, including:

- Disability training program to increase inclusion across CHAI and its partners.
- Community mental health training program to improve primary care level responses to mental health issues.
- Palliative care training program to enhance end-of-life care.
- mhealth (mobile health) and digital health training to equip CHAI's 3,250 institutions to more efficiently meet the health needs of the poorest and geographically isolated.
- Two programs that meet the emerging needs of the CHAI workforce. These could include: maternal and child health; primary healthcare models; injury prevention and management; HIV/AIDS; healthcare management; and/or, climate change and health.

3. RESEARCH

Establish the Sister Mary Glowrey Research Institute in India to increase the capacity of CHAI and University staff to undertake research. Staff will be trained to conduct applied research to find evidence-based solutions to the complex health needs of poor and marginalised communities in India.

Within the next five years, the University aims to:

- Train and employ 10 research staff and a project manager.
- Foster collaborative research by providing seed funding for research programs annually.
- Employ a post-doctoral researcher and a PhD student to conduct research on CHAI's alternative health system.
- Offer travel scholarships for University of Melbourne students and staff to conduct fieldwork with colleagues at CHAI.

IMPACT

Sharing knowledge and experience is the most powerful way to impact the health of the people of India. The most cost-effective way to do this is to upskill Indian healthcare workers that are passionate and committed to providing care to those most in need. This program will improve the quality of life for millions of people across India and will thereby honour the legacy of one of the leading humanitarians of the twentieth century, Doctor Sister Mary Glowrey.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE