

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT THE INTERNATIONAL SPINE CORD CONFERENCE ISSICON 2018  
AT HYATT REGENCY, ANNA SALAI, CHENNAI ON 06.10.2018 AT 7.00 P.M.**

**AnaivarukkumMaalaiVanakkam**

**Dr. S.Chandrakumar**

Executive Chairman, Kauvery Hospital

**Dr. Aravindran**

Executive Director, Kauvery Hospital

**Dr. H.S. Chhabra**

President, International Spinal Cord Society

**Dr. Balamurali**

Organising Chairman

**Dr. A.K. Mukerji**

President, Spinal Cord Society

**Dr. J.J. Wyandaele**

Past President

International Spinal Cord Society

**Distinguished Invitees/ Ladies & Gentlemen**

I am happy to be here today at the Kauvery Hospital, Chennai for the International Spine and Injuries Conference. I am informed that such a meet is being held for the first time in Chennai.

The theme of the conference, 'Spinal Cord Injury Care in Emerging India' is of great importance. We all know that spinal cord injury is a devastating and disabling injury. It has extremely adverse consequences for the individual, his or her family, and society. It is also an area where a lot of work still needs to be done. The convening of this international conference is therefore timely and most appropriate.

The W.H.O. recognizes spinal injuries as a major musculo-skeletal condition that present a serious disease burden. Statistics of spinal cord injuries in India are somewhat unclear, with the number of such injuries being estimated at 15,000 to 20,000 every year.

Spinal cord Injury (SCI) or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a life-altering experience since it leaves the person in a state of complete paralysis. Most victims are male, usually below 40 years of age and the main breadwinners of the family. This squeezes the entire family's resources and reduces them to a state of impoverishment.

Unfortunately, there's no way to reverse the damage to the spinal cord. But researchers are continuously working on new treatments, including medication for enabling nerve cell regeneration.

Urgent medical attention is critical to minimising the effects, caused by Spinal Cord injury. Therefore, treatment for a spinal cord injury often begins at the scene of the accident.

Rehabilitation helps people gain greater independence after illness, injury or surgery. Following Spinal cord and Brain Injury it is the only hope to independent living and for avoiding complications.

To achieve this, a state of the art centre with an experienced team is needed. There are two main goals of rehabilitation are, one to relearn activities of daily living for self care, and vocational skills to earn their living for inclusion into the community and secondly to relearn how to prevent complications from the disability for the rest of their lives. Several neurological conditions like stroke take a long period of physical, mental and speech rehabilitation. Children with mental and physical disability need prolonged and continuous rehabilitation for life. Occupational therapy helps prepare persons with disability to acquire and enhance skills to return to work. There is enough scientific evidence to show that rehabilitation improves the quality of life. It brings confidence, encouragement and to start a new life after injury or illness.

There is an increasing demand for rehabilitation from across all specialties including brain, spine, orthopedics, pediatrics, elderly and post operative care. Currently there are only 2 dedicated rehabilitation centres for the whole country at Vellore and Delhi. Both these centres cannot care for the 1.3 billion population. It will be necessary to create a centre in every state capital, to begin with.

Prevention is better than cure is a well known saying. The best course of action is to ensure that we do not suffer a spine injury. This is easier said than done because most of us do not realize that the spinal cord is at the centre of the nervous system. It is not another bone of the human body as most of us think it to be. This awareness should therefore be created first.

The incidence of spinal cord injury is on the rise and this is a serious social problem as one member in the family will disable the entire family.

The Common causes of spinal cord injuries are

- **Motor vehicle accidents.** Auto and motorcycle accidents are the leading cause of spinal cord injuries, accounting for almost half of new spinal cord injuries each year. With the increasing number of trucks and two wheelers the possibility of traffic related accidents is on the increase.
- **Falls.** A spinal cord injury after age 65 is most often caused by a fall. Overall, falls cause more than 15 percent of spinal cord injuries.
- **Acts of violence.** Around 12 percent of spinal cord injuries result from violent encounters, often involving gunshot and knife wounds.
- **Sports and recreation injuries.** Athletic activities, such as impact sports and diving in shallow water, cause about 10 percent of spinal cord injuries.
- **Alcohol.** Alcohol use is a factor accounting for a fair share of spinal cord injuries.
- **Diseases.** Cancer, arthritis, osteoporosis and inflammation of the spinal cord also can cause spinal cord injuries.

It is necessary to take some precautions if someone is suspected of having spine injury:

- Don't move the injured person — permanent paralysis and other serious complications may result otherwise
- Call an ambulance or your local emergency medical assistance number
- Keep the person still

- Place heavy towels on both sides of the neck or hold the head and neck to prevent them from moving until emergency care arrives
- Provide basic first aid, such as stopping any bleeding and making the person comfortable, without moving the head or neck

I am sure that this conference will help medical and paramedical professionals, policy makers and the community bring more focus to the subject of managing the treatment of those who have suffered Spinal Cord Injuries.

I am sure that a number of useful ideas will be expressed at the conference and that there will be a free exchange of views any the experts.

I wish to conclude by saying that the members of the medical profession are not merely doctors. To the patient they are his saviours and the pain relieving messiahs. In the words of the famous French philosopher Voltaire “Those who are occupied in the restoration of health to others, by the joint exertion of skill and humanity, are above all the great of the earth. They even partake of divinity, since to preserve and renew is almost as noble as to create”

I Congratulate the organizers for bringing together international and national spine and neuro surgeons, as well as nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and therapists and all others involved in the treatment of spinal cord injuries at this conference. I wish them well in all their efforts.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind...