

ISPAD Allan Drash Fellowship Report

Recipient: Rakesh Kumar, Faculty, Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes Unit at Advanced Pediatrics center, PGIMER, Chandigarh, India

Host Center: The Sydney Children's Hospital at Westmead, Department of Pediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes, Sydney, Australia

Mentors: A/Prof Ann Maguire & A/Prof Shubha Srinivasan

Duration: 6 weeks (**18th May – 30th June 2022**)

Background

I applied for ISPAD's Allan Drash Fellowship in 2019 to visit Westmead Children's Hospital in Sydney with kind acceptance from the host center. I met my prospective mentor A/Prof Ann Maguire at the Annual ISPAD meeting in Boston (2019) to discuss my objectives and expected outcomes from my fellowship at their center. Although I was selected for the fellowship in 2020, I could not complete my fellowship in 2020-21 due to COVID-related restrictions. I regularly communicated with my mentor in Sydney and the ISPAD office with updates on my progress in starting the fellowship. Dr. Ann Maguire was very kind to reply to my frequent emails and helped me through the formalities and documents required for my Visa and other requirements to work as a Fellow at the Sydney Children's Hospital (SCH).

I am a consultant Pediatric Endocrinologist at a tertiary care Pediatric center in north India. Over the years, many patients with T1D (1700 plus) have been registered and managed at the center. My main objectives for this fellowship were to gain more experience in the use of technology in the management of T1D and observe the role of each team member of the T1D care team and replicate the same at our center to improve T1D care and services.

Summary of the activities as part of the fellowship

At the outset, I would state that the fellowship at SCH was very successful, and I learned much more than I expected from this visit. Dr Ann Maguire and Dr Shubha Srinivasan had chalked out my program for the 6 weeks very critically so that I could make the best use of my fellowship. I was offered to be involved in all the clinical and academic activities of the department and work with all the consultants (12 in number) in the outpatient department (Diabetes Clinics) and in-door patient services. I was rotated to work with all the Diabetes Nurses (six of them and a school nurse), dieticians (3 of them), and social workers. It was enriching to interact with Pediatric endocrine trainee fellows daily to learn all the local protocols for various Pediatric diabetes and endocrine-related conditions.

A good number of patients were visiting the Pediatric Diabetes clinic every day, and the majority were using the latest technology for T1D in the form of continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices and Insulin pumps. It was good learning for me to see patients using the newest hybrid close loop insulin pumps (T-slim + Dexcom & Medtronic 770/780 G with CGM) and using the technology efficiently to improve their glycemic control. Using different software and applications to download/access the pump and CGM in the outpatient clinic was a new experience for me.

Diabetes self-management education (DSME) being provided in a day-care setting in "Diabetes Education Centre (DEC)" was also a new experience for me. Observing the Dietitians, Nurse Educators, and Social workers working with the patients in tandem helped me understand each team member's role. A visit to the school for recently diagnosed children with diabetes to educate the school staff and a 'Diabetes Nurse educator for school' was a new experience for me.

Overall, it was a very productive experience to watch a fully accomplished team working in unison to improve diabetes care for children with T1D. I hope to establish a similar T1D services care team at our center back in India. I believe this fellowship will go a long way in improving Pediatric diabetes care at our center.