

OVERVIEW OF HEALTHCARE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Day: Saturday

Date: May 2nd, 2015

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Venue: Auditorium, Symbiosis International University, Lavale Campus, Pune

Speakers: Lt. Gen Dr. M. A. Tutakne and Mr. Vishal Laroia

Lt. Gen. Dr. Tutakne began the session by stating that he was pleased to learn that 30% of the doctors in India are ethically motivated, making a reference to the previous lecture by Dr. Chinchure and Mr. Kapila. He agreed that ethics plays a major role in fostering cordial international relations.

The Indian drug industry has done well in the global market by producing cheaper drugs and by promoting medical tourism. He stressed that healthcare partnerships go a long way in reinforcing international relations.

Lt. Gen. Tutakane talked about global issues such as epidemics (HIV and Ebola), and declared that the “right to health” is an integral part of the “right to life”—further, both are the government responsibility. He also spoke about the effects of ill health on India’s economy. The link between health and security grew after 9/11 and after Anthrax became a big scare in 2001.

Human health has been adversely affected by global inter-connectedness, in the sense that there is a new geographical distribution of vectors and because of the emergence of newer infections. Policies on health are important areas to act upon because they serve the basic needs of the community.

He said that international health regulations are obligatory, and the WHO has formulated rules to this effect. Improving global health will improve response to infections, build public health capacity, and maximize organization capacity. Healthcare managers should work with one common aim: to make healthcare accessible to the maximum number of people across the globe.

Mr. Vishal Laroia began his talk with a video recording about medical tourism. He described his company, UniHealth Global Pvt. Ltd., as a provider of consultancy services for different verticals of healthcare. He educated the audience on five essential parameters of medical tourism: VIP service, quality care, physician relationships, local relationships, and affiliations.

He explained that India is a favorite destination for medical tourism because of relatively low cost of healthcare service, availability of medical experts and equipment, low waiting time, and specialty treatment.

He discussed the India-Africa relationship, and stated that India surpasses African countries in the medical tourism industry. This is due to factors such as poor healthcare implementation, budgetary constraints, poor public health delivery system, lack of accessibility and quality, limited human resource capacity, and inadequate infrastructure.

Medical tourism in India, he emphasized, is fueled mainly by Africa (Tanzania, Nigeria, and Kenya); the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Oman, and Yemen); SAARC (Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka); and CIS countries (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan). He further discussed the effects of globalization on healthcare policies in the context of inter-country relations.

He opined that the opportunities for growth of medical tourism industry are enormous due to India's HR policies, JCI and NABH accreditation, political stability, experienced and skilled consultants, and specialized infrastructure. Moreover, there is a strategic tie-up between UniHealth and IRCTC to promote medical tourism in India.

Mr. Laroia concluded the session by stating that medical tourism will foster growth of the Indian economy by bringing in foreign exchange, which will help hospitals and other healthcare verticals to develop in the long run in a sustainable manner.