

OVERSEAS TRAINING VISIT ON HIV/ART- CHENNAI, INDIA

March-2024

Report

Participants

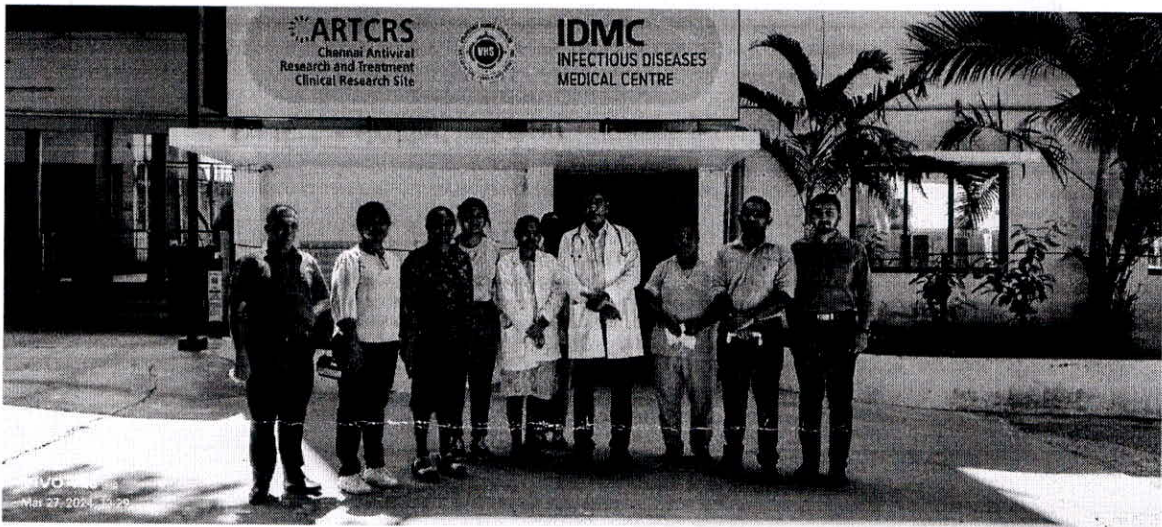
Dr Theja Hurugamuwa (MO STD – Kaluthara)
Dr Gayan Samarasinghe (MO STD – Ragama)
Dr Sasith Udugama (MO STD – Chilaw)
Mr. Maleesha Jayarathna (PHI – NSACP)
Ms. Aruni Priyangika (NO STD – Negambo)

Supervised by – Dr Piyumi Perera (Consultant
Venereologist, STD clinic Puttalam)

OVERSEAS TRAINING VISIT ON HIV/ART- CHENNAI, INDIA 2024

1. Introduction to VHS IDMC including staff, location
2. Services available including community projects
3. General activities of the hospital
4. Differences of service delivery between this site and Sri Lanka
5. New knowledge gained
6. How we can improve our setting

1. Introduction to VHS IDMC including staff, location



VHS IDMC

- VHS-Infectious Diseases Medical Centre(IDMC) (formerly VHS-YRG CARE Medical Centre) in Voluntary Health Services provides medical care for mainly persons with HIV disease, Tuberculosis, Viral Hepatitis and other Infectious diseases.
- About 40-45 outpatients attend the clinic everyday
- The center has registered more than 20,000 persons with HIV for medical care since 1996.
- Currently 6000 HIV patients are followed up as outpatients.
- CART Clinical Research Site has contributed to more than 350 original scientific manuscripts and published in peer reviewed reputed medical journals.
- The outcome of the research studies conducted at the CART Clinical Research Site has assisted to develop Treatment Guidelines for World Health Organization

VHS IDMC staff

- ❖ *Dr.N.Kumarasamy (MBBS, FRCP, PhD)*

Chief & Director of VHS

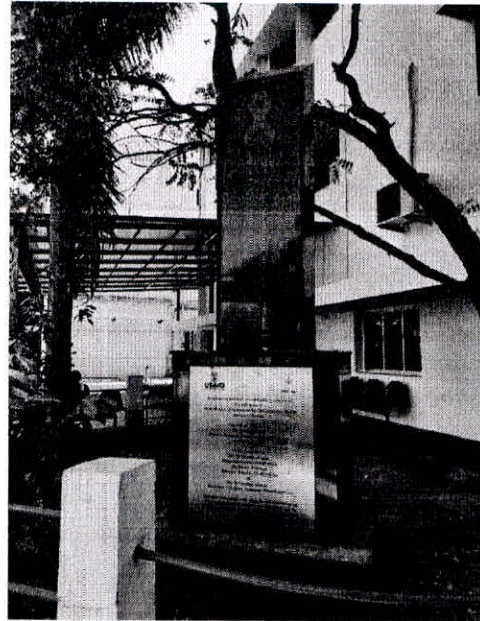
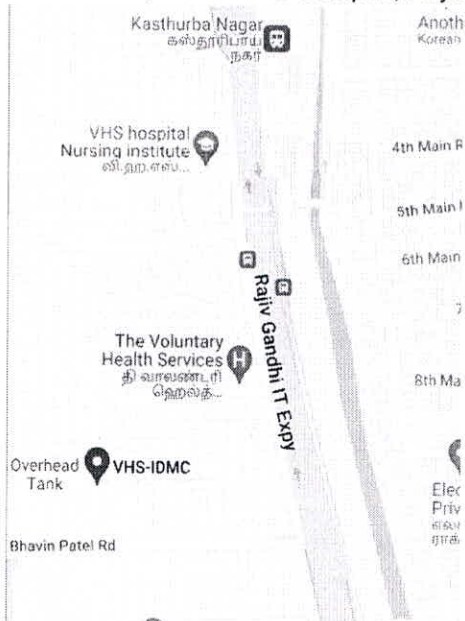


Dr. Kumarasamy directs the clinic which provides medical care for PLHIV and Site Leader for the Chennai Antiviral Research and Treatment (CART) Clinical Research Site of US National Institutes of Health which conducts multisite Therapeutics (ACTG) and prevention (HPTN) clinical trials.

- ❖ *Dr. S. Poonguzhali, (MBBS, DGO, PhD) - Senior Consultant*
- ❖ In ward doctors
- ❖ Counsellors
- ❖ Nurses
- ❖ Dispensers
- ❖ Research team
- ❖ Helpers
- ❖ other staff

Location

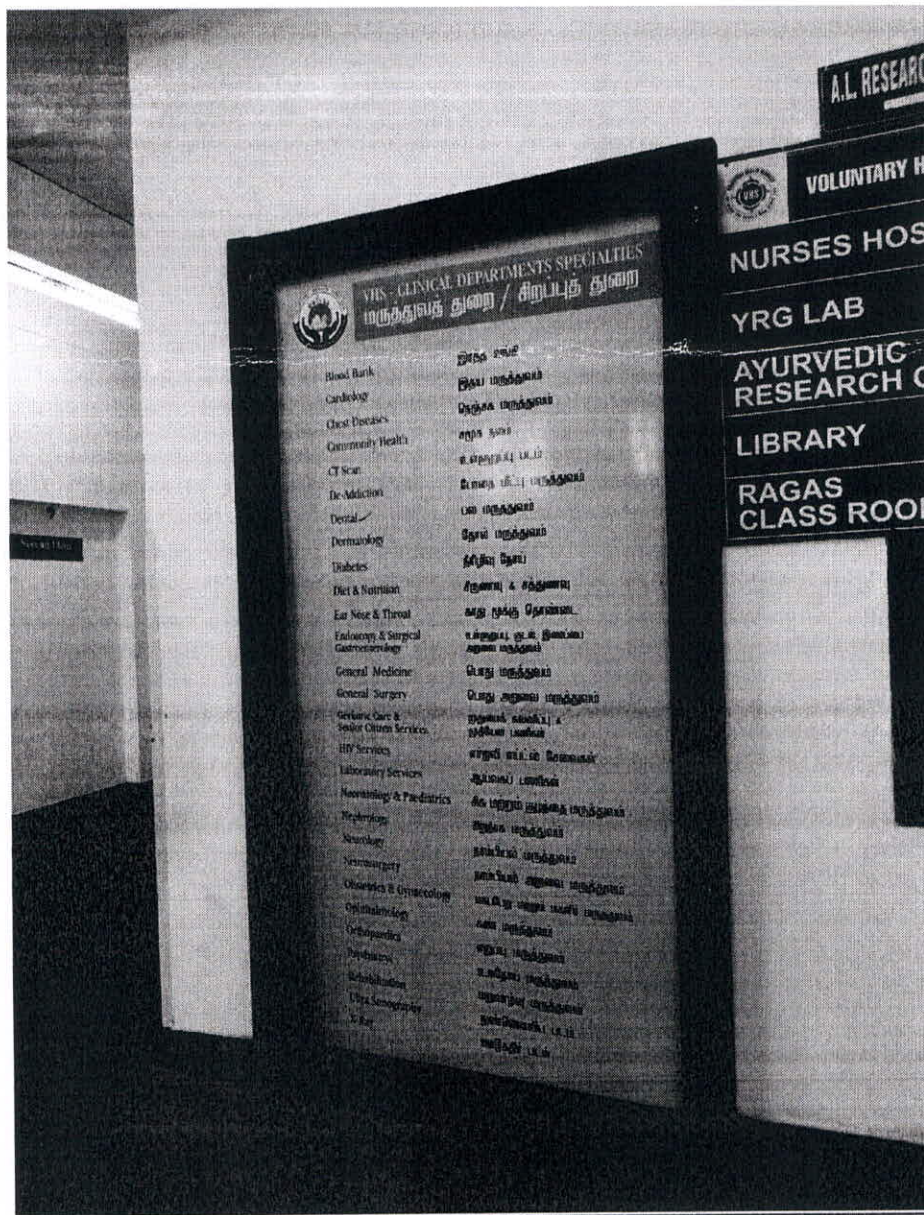
262W+MCJ, Inside VHS Campus, Rajiv Gandhi Salai, Tharamani, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600113, India



2. Services available including community projects

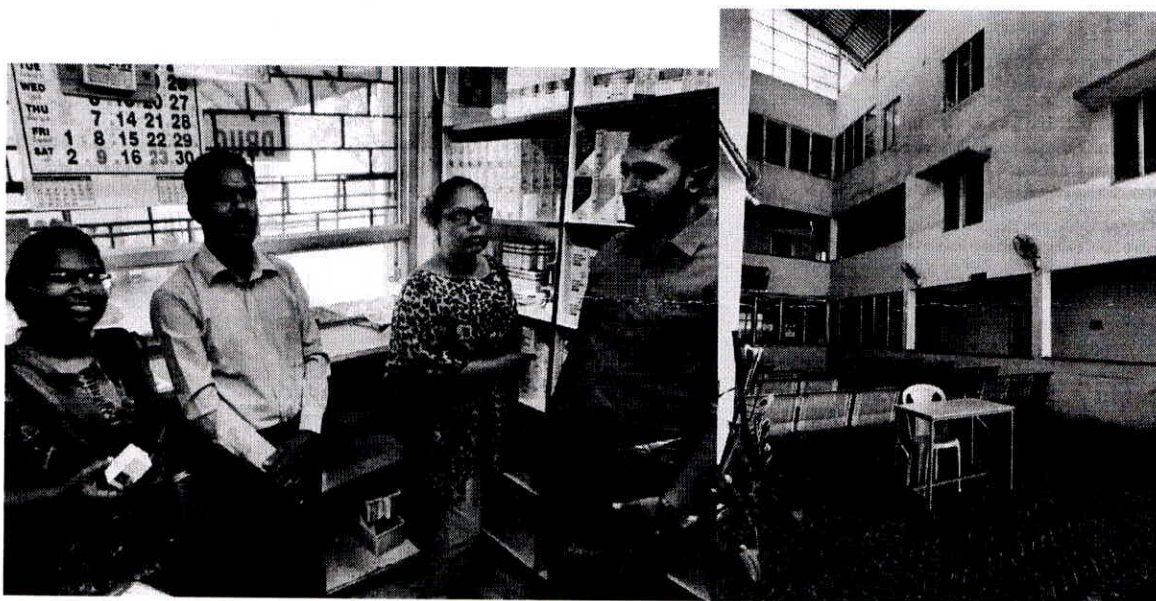
- The center provides medical care, psychosocial counseling with subsidized Antiretroviral medications.
- The center has Outpatient, Inpatient, acute care and diagnostic facilities for persons with HIV, Tuberculosis, Viral Hepatitis and other Infectious diseases.
- Inpatient care provided as common ward, individual normal rooms and deluxe luxury rooms
- Provided all laboratory functions, radiological investigations
- Including emergency, preventive care, De addiction center, endocrine & diabetes center, eye care, blood bank, maternal and child care, cardiology, rheumatology, orthopedic, neurosurgery, oncology, general medicine, general surgery, dentistry, dermatology, ENT, urology, plastic surgery
- 2 academics including Department of Clinical Research and Training

- Chennai Antiviral Research and Treatment Clinical Research Site (CART CRS) located at VHS-Infectious Diseases Medical Centre
- Conducts several clinical, epidemiological, psychosocial and biomedical research studies in collaboration with National Institutes of Health-USA; University of California-San Diego; Brown University, Providence, RI; Harvard University, Boston; Stanford University, CA; University of California-San Francisco; CA; Johns Hopkins University, MD; University of Melbourne; University of New South Wales, Sydney; American Foundation for AIDS Research. etc.



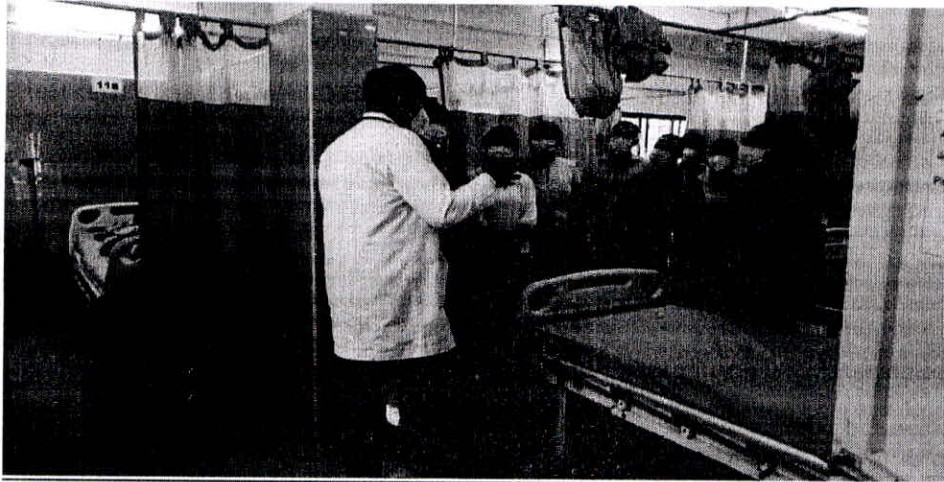
3. General activities of the hospital

- Registration counter - patients should register at 1st visit as well as in every visit
- Patients waiting area - patients will stay until their number is announced
- Bleeding room - nurses takes blood for investigations
- Biometric room - body weight, height and blood pressure will be measured
- Counseling room - pre testing, post testing, couple counseling, adherence counseling and all necessary discussion will be carried out in each visit
- Doctors room - general history and examination, checking investigation reports, necessary measurements, referrals, advises and prescribing ART are carried out
- Dispensary -issuing of all ART, antihypertensives, statins, inhalers, and some other related medications



4. Differences of service delivery between this site and Sri Lanka

- Government and private sector both provide care of PLHIV.
- There is an understanding between the public sector and private sector when it comes to managing PLHIV.
For example, some patients get ART from public sector clinics while visiting VHS IDMC to get investigations done and for the rest of the management.
- ART is available in private sector pharmacies and patients can buy with prescription of consultant.
- Counseling is mainly carried out by counselors who have well experience with sociology and psychology fields.
- ART is given for 6 months or 12 months for stable patients.
- ART response is monitored with annual Viral load count.
- CD4 count is measured every six months.
- Viral load and CD4 test results are usually available within around 6 hours after providing the sample.
- Availability of a fully equipped hospital with all the major subspecialties within the same premises and under the same organization, makes referral procedure more streamlined and causes less burden to the patient.
Therefore being able to provide a much more holistic care for PLHIV within the same organization.
- Having multiple regimens of ART, including combinations which comes handy when trying to reduce the pill burden.
- Since VHS IDMC is an independent organization they are quick to adopt newly developed research findings and management strategies.
- Excellent inward management are available, If needed.



Inward care

5. New knowledge gained

- Gained an insight into the progress achieved in HIV management throughout the years.
- Understanding the collaborations between the public sector and private sector when it comes to managing PLHIV.
- The importance of good counseling for patients in every visit with a dedicated counsellor.
- The importance of conducting research and clinical trials in view of generating new evidence to improve patient care.

6. How we can improve our setting

- Training a specific health care worker for counselling of patients as doctors can be heavily burdened with medical management and limited time.
- Each health care worker including doctors, nurses and PHIs should get proper counseling/ psychological knowledge/ training by workshops, lectures etc
- Availability of laboratory functions throughout the year such as viral load testing.
- Data collection and annual returns should not be taken as a burden, but as a part of medical practice.

Parallel practice of both medical practice and data collection for research and studies leads to a good outcome of overall patient care as well as knowledge update.

- Possibility of public private partnerships to improve healthcare needs to be explored.

