

Notes on MAM 2015

8th and 9th August 2015, Satyodayam, Tarnaka

The following occurred at the Mid Annual Meeting at Hyderabad on 8-9 August 2015. The meeting was held in Satyodayam Retreat at Tarnaka. About 35 participants attended the meeting on the first day, and about 40 on the second day.

The meeting was divided into three major segments and a closing discussion:

a) Vaccines (a preparatory discussion)

This discussion was conducted on the first half of the 8th led by Sarojini, Amar, Madhavi and Anant in person, and with Yogesh on Skype, since he was unavoidably detained at Bilaspur due to a personal crisis. The discussion was rich and focused on the problems that arose with the introduction of the new vaccines by pharma industry, and with State actors following big money. It was found necessary to have a discussion with a larger number of scientific and state actors participating in the coming months.

b) Urbanization

This discussion was conducted on the afternoon of the 8th, with Prabir leading the discussion. A great many ideas presented themselves with many people who were working on the ground contributing their own experience based perspectives on the subject. There were different perspectival issues that came up for discussion. Some of the topics that were thrown up were:

- The Migrant and the City -- Sheela and Rahul were looking at this
- The informal sector -- The Jeedimetla Study: Mithun had some work to present.
- Health Systems in Urban Areas and problems of access -- Devaki Nambiar would be requested
- Inequality city/urban -- Srivats would provide a background note.
- The problem of outbreaks of disease -- not identified
- Environment and Urban health -- Adithya was willing to present a paper on solid waste in this area.
- Chronic diseases and the city -- not identified
- Alternative medicines and urban health -- not identified.
- Budgets for Urban Health -- we could request Ravi D to present something
- Public places and urban health
- Gender, Health and the City -- much work has been done, but presenter not identified.
- Roads and Health - not identified
- Urban Ghettos and Health -- not identified.
- A paper on Shaheed Hospital -- Pavan may be (from Shaheed)?
- Invite rag pickers to present their perspective -- Manisha suggested this.

It was felt that Urbanization and Health was a very vast theme, and it would be difficult to present a paper on this. Rather the theme title suggested was

Inequity in Health and Health Care in Urban Areas

Progress: Towards this end, Prabir, who will be organizing the annual has already started an egroup, which has begun sharing perspectives and papers. A rough theme structure was suggested by Srivats which has been accepted by the members of the egroup for further refinement and use.

More detailed notes will follow

c) Chronic Diseases

The session on Chronic Diseases was conducted on the 9th morning with Srivats, Yogesh, Anand Z and Anurag (both these last on Skype). Sathyamala who was a contributor couldn't come on line, and Srinath Reddy was detained due to a personal crisis.

There was an extensive discussion that covered vast ground in a preliminary manner.

Questions raised were:

What are chronic diseases?

How reliable are chronic disease thresholds?

How viable and stable is the category of chronic diseases?

How are chronic diseases related to development and to capitalism?

What would be a democratic, people oriented definition of chronic diseases be?

The notes of this discussion have been uploaded on the dropbox with the link below.

It was felt that it would be useful to have a chronic diseases annual discussion in MFC 2017, if possible. This was because Yogesh is one of the commissioners for Lancet, who have been asked to research chronic diseases among the poor. They are likely to come to India in 2017, since Yogesh wants to have them visit Ganiyari. He proposes that we try to focus this MFC discussion towards that date (January 2017) so that the Lancet commissioners can sit in on a discussion by MFC as observers and learn our perspective.

Overall the group felt the discussion was breaking new ground and was a useful intervention in the activism/struggle against the current tide of medicalization and the medical industry's dominance.