

Meeting Report

Second World Ayurveda Congress

University of Pune, Pune, Maharashtra, India, November 5–12, 2006

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The Second World Ayurveda Congress will be hosted by the University of Pune during November 5–12, 2006, with the overall theme, ‘Ayurveda for the Future’. It is anticipated that the Congress will generate even greater global interest in Ayurveda than the First World Ayurveda Congress, held at Cochin, Kerala, in November 2002, visited by over 300 000 people. For those who wish to attend the Congress, the Congress web site, www.ayurworld.org, contains all necessary information, such as time for paper submission, registration fees, visa and inoculation requirements and so on.

The Congress will be addressed by many leaders of the initiative to put Ayurveda on a scientific footing, so that it can be fully integrated into the health care practices and policies of modern governments. Only then will its unique approach to prevention and treatment be available for all the people of the world. Among such leaders, special mention should be made of Padmabhushan Professor R. A. Mashelkar FRS, Director of India’s Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, whose ‘Golden Triangle’ vision of Modern Science, Ayurveda and Modern Medicine lies at the heart of the Indian Government’s extensive current programs to establish the scientific validity of Ayurveda in both theory and practice, Padmavibhushan Dr M. S. Valiathan, developer of the tilting disc heart valve, and Dr Ashok Vaidya, who pioneered the concept of ‘reverse pharmacology’, in order to accelerate the verification of Ayurvedic herbal medicines and their mechanisms of action.

The Congress is planned around four themes as follows: education, research, industry and publications. All its activities revolve around these, with special emphasis on science as the language of our times, both for the communication of valid knowledge and the means by which Ayurveda will expand globally. Special sessions will include (i) a presentation on activities of Ayurveda in different countries around the world outside India and (ii) a workshop by Professor Edwin Cooper,

Editor-in-Chief of *eCAM*. The first will be chaired by Professor Gerard Bodeker of Oxford and Columbia Universities, a pioneer in modern programs to bring traditional systems of medicine into policy considerations of medical authorities at national, international and global levels; the second will provide training for Ayurvedic doctors and scientists in the procedures necessary for publishing studies and papers in refereed scientific journals in the West, and so upgrade the level of publications on Ayurveda.

Other presentations of wide interest will concern Ayusoft and Ayugenomics. Ayusoft comprises a large e-accessible knowledge base making all of Ayurveda, including its major texts, available as a resource for research, to improve medical practice, and for general knowledge and education. The latter, the work of Pune University’s Professor Patwardhan, Convener of the Congress, constitutes the firm connection so far made between the Ayurveda theory and the hardcore of modern biological sciences.

Two days of the Congress, November 8 and 9, will be devoted to Gynecology in Ayurveda and related practices. Scientific presentations at the Congress will be held on the final 3 days, November 10–12. Forty-eight separate sessions are scheduled in four different lecture areas. They will include three kinds of presentation as follows: plenary sessions, parallel sessions for technical presentations and poster sessions. Those wishing to submit papers should send an English language abstract of not more than 200 words to wac2006pune@gmail.com by July 30, for the conference committee to consider. Full text of approved papers (which may be in Hindi, English or Sanskrit) should reach the organizing committee by September 15, 2006. The Congress will also showcase best practice in Ayurveda, giving demonstrations of specific techniques.

A unique aspect of the Congress will be its exhibition of live medicinal plants, ~300 species having already been planted on a 2.5 acre plot adjacent to the Congress Hall. A large exhibition and trade fair will also be included in the Congress,

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some 300 stands of all sizes ranging 3 m × 3 m upwards are being planned. Those interested in exhibiting should contact the web site for details of stand sizes and prices.

The host institution, the University of Pune, is familiar with Congresses of the anticipated size, having already run two, one of which, in 2000, attracted over half a million visitors. It is host to a number of world-renowned institutes and national laboratories, such as C-DAC, the originator of India's Supercomputer, where Ayusoft was developed; IUCAA, founded by Professor Narlikar; the Tata Institute for Fundamental Research; the National Chemical Laboratory; and the National Centre for Cell Science. The university is situated on a beautiful campus of ~400 acres. It is one of India's leading universities with thousands of foreign postgraduate students. It possesses a flourishing and expanding Department of Ayurveda. The university has already declared the year 2006 as 'Ayurveda Awareness year'.

The other chief organizer of the Congress is Vijnana Bharati, the largest humanist scientific organization in India, with membership spread across the country. It is a dynamic movement aiming to include sociospiritual sciences such as Yoga along with natural material studies in the courses it promotes throughout India.

The Organizing Committee invites all the people with connections to Ayurveda, or other interests in the traditional sciences and medical systems of the East, to come and enjoy this celebration of Ayurveda's traditional medical system. Come and see how Ayurveda is adapting to the demands and requirements of the 21st century, so that it can continue to provide its unique systems of diagnosis, healing and restoration of perfect health and well-being to those in need.

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