



## FERTILITY PRESERVATION SOCIETY (India)

The Fertility Preservation Society of India had its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference 'Fertiprotect-2016' on the 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> of August at Bengaluru, India.

Dr. Dror Meirow - President elect of ISFP and Dr. Teresa Woodruff - Director Oncofertility Consortium - luminaries from the Oncofertility field participated in the event. The deliberations at our annual conferences in the last three years have progressed from basic concepts in oncofertility to research and future innovations.

*The Fertility Preservation Society (India)* was set up in 2014 to address the issue of oncofertility awareness amongst the medical community and cancer survivors in India. The practice of oncofertility (an amalgamation of cancer and fertility management) necessitates not only knowledge of ART and the associated FP techniques, but also an understanding of cancer treatment and its associated fertility risk. Keeping this in mind, the society focused on dissemination of accurate information and skill acquisition through CME's, conferences and hands on workshops. The society is cognizant of the level of responsibility in dealing with young men and women who are battling death and yet looking for light beyond the darkness.

**Conferences:** The first Fertiprotect conference was held in 2014 in

association with Delhi Cancer Institute, under the guidance of Dr. Dror Meirow and had an endorsement from ISFP and JSFP (Japanese Society for Fertility Preservation). It had eight international speakers and essentially was an introduction to the concept of fertility preservation. There were sessions on cancer treatments, techniques, ethics, legality, counselling and application. Dr. Cesar Diaz presented the world's first case of uterine transplantation at the meeting. The experience and standing of the speakers was highly appreciated by the delegates and for many the possibility of fertility preservation in cancer patients was an eye-opener. Dr. Nao Suzuki and his team conducted a hands-on workshop on ovarian tissue cryopreservation. Registration in this workshop was restricted to experienced embryologists.



Our second conference, **Fertiprotect 2015** in September 2015 had faculty comprising of leaders in the field of Fertility preservation and reproductive medicine. Dr. Sam Kim (Past President, ISFP), Dr. Claus Y. Andersen (Board member, ISFP), Dr. Juan Garcia (IVI Spain), Dr. Human Fatemi (Abu Dhabi), Dr. Jennifer Levine (USA) and Dr. Louise Hull (Australia). Special topics included problems faced in counselling in the paediatric age group, pro-fertility counselling and fertility preservation in conditions such as endometriosis and immune disorders.



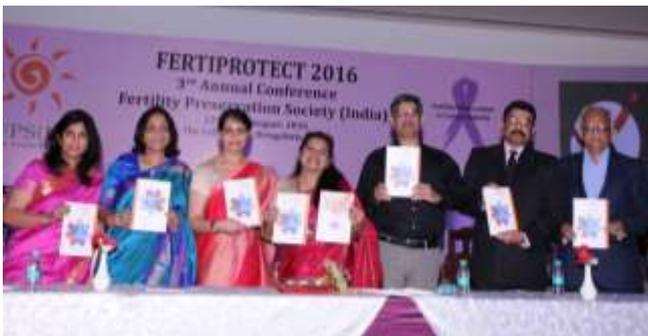
**Fertiprotect 2016** saw a very active participation of oncologists. Our International faculty created a stir amongst the delegates with presentation of their research. Dr. Dror Meirow presented his work on AMH for gonadal protection and Dr. Teresa Woodruff gave fascinating lectures on

achieving ovulation in-vitro with granulosa cells grown on a scaffold and the importance of the 'Zinc Spark' during fertilization. Dr. Ethiraj Prasath Balaji from Singapore presented his work on FP in ovarian cancer patients and Dr. Wiweko Budi from Indonesia gave us an insight into FP in Turner's syndrome. The sessions were conducted in a manner that the oncologists talked about the disease and treatment followed by the RM specialist giving their perspective on fertility management. Interesting and insightful discussions were held on the aspect of counseling, safety of procedures, endocrinological and metabolic problems and sexuality issues in cancer survivors.



**Academic activities:** In the year 2014-2015 a survey was conducted by Dr. Nalini Mahajan – President, FPSI on the knowledge and practices of FP amongst gynaecologists and oncologists in India. The results were presented at the ISFP congress in China in 2015 and a paper was published on the role of gynaecologists in creating FP awareness. The survey highlighted the lack of awareness and lacunae in

knowledge amongst the specialists. In the year 2015 the society also brought out a book for its members on the 'Basic Principles in Fertility Preservation'. The Chief Minister of Delhi released the book at Fertiprotect 2015. Many international authors were kind enough to contribute to this. The idea behind bringing out the handbook was to impart important basic information to reproductive specialists and oncologists. The book includes international guidelines and recommendations in this area. A chapter on the medico-legal aspects has been included which gives important information on documentation and consent. An ethical debate is basic to all practice of medicine; more so in this area where we are offering hope to patients suffering from what has long been considered a terminal illness. Keeping this in mind a chapter on ethics has been included.



In 2016, 'Fertility Preservation – an Indian Perspective' was published. In this book the authors have attempted to understand the International guidelines in the context of the social economic and cultural differences that exist between India and the West.

**Newsletters and e-updates:** The members write short articles regularly

which are sent as e-updates and more detailed articles which go in the print format in a quarterly printed newsletter. We also held workshops and CME's in association with major cancer hospitals across India.

**Public Awareness effort:** The year 2015 - 2016 also saw immense activity on the social awareness front. We brought out information booklets for cancer patients that were distributed to cancer hospitals. Our public awareness campaign has received immense support from NGO's like the Breast cancer forum, Can Support and from cancer survivor groups. Our association with Can Support an NGO involved in care of cancer patients helps us in reaching out and giving information to the paramedical staff and those involved in care of cancer survivors. A film on FP was also made and displayed at various forums to improve understanding on effects of cancer therapy on fertility and possibilities on Fertility Preservation. We had a breast survivor support group – say 'Yes to Life' perform at our inauguration during Fertiprotect - 2015. The courage and positive attitude of these young breast cancer survivors made a huge impact.

We have a long way to go but I am proud to say that three years from our inception we have managed to make a small but significant difference in the field of oncofertility.

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