



Newsletter 2003-2004



September 2003 - August 2004

The past year has been another very busy one for the Ladakh Heart Foundation (LHF). We have been continuing and extending our activities over Ladakh, trying to prevent and cure all forms of heart disease, while also concerning ourselves with the general health of the local population, which explain the creation, this year, of the Ladakh Institute of Prevention (LIP), dedicated to environmental, occupation, life style related and high altitude diseases. The activities of this newly born institute, with Lama Chogyal as its executive director, are presented in a separated newsletter. Our efforts (Ladakh Heart Foundation) can be broken down into five main areas:

- Primary preventative medicine, including primary prevention of acute rheumatic fever, as in the past years. Lectures and seminars were the main means of communication to impart health education.
- Village clinics in out-lying regions.
- The maintenance of a register of all patients in the region, and the continued monitoring of their conditions.
- Surgery and diagnostic clinics.
- Contributing, in a humble way, to the health care facilities provided by the government by initiating innovative projects, but always with the final objective of creating an environment conducive to make those projects

acceptable to the government and the population, which also applies to LIP activities.

In context of the last point, we are delighted to highlight that two of our initiatives are now well accepted both by the government as well as the population. The first one consists in the local government (L.A.H.D.C.) agreeing to bear the expenses incurred on the cardiothoracic surgery (P.D.A. and Mitral Valvotomy) being conducted by Professor Sampath Kumar, Cardiovascular Surgeon, in the local government owned hospital (S.N.M. Hospital). The initiative and the expenses involved were initially the responsibility of LHF and the Venerable Lama Lobsang, Hon'ble member of Sheduled Tribe Government of India.

Secondly, our primary prevention program against acute rheumatic fever, involving Benzathine Penicillin prophylaxis in children of age 5 to 15 suffering from streptococcal throat infection, is now well accepted by the patients and the medical profession in Ladakh. LHF initiated this program and still bears the expenses. The good outcome of this preventive program has resulted in acceptance by all parties concerned. We look forward to hand it over permanently to the government in near future.

In the meantime, LHF is also proud to announce that the construction of the new hospital has progressed considerably over the last year, as well as the guesthouse attached to it. What follows is a little more detail on the advances that have been made and we include some photos, as well.

Lecture Programs

The lectures are all given by Dr. Norboo, and are designed to educate Ladakh about the ten impending diseases of the new millenium. These are:

1. Hypertension
2. High cholesterol
3. Smoking
4. Obesity, leading to diabetes
5. Diet (prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer)
6. Heart Attack
7. Sexually transmitted disease, HIV and AIDS
8. Environmental and occupational health disease
9. Accident prevention
10. Mental health

As Ladakh rapidly develops and changes economically and culturally, it is vital that the population understands and can make steps to address these new issues; hypertension is exceptionally common due to the local butter tea, and Ladakh has the lowest age of onset of stomach cancer in the world. The information is tailored for the cultural background in which it is to be received.

Dr. Norboo and other members of the Foundation travel to the villages with the generator and projection equipment of the Ladakh Heart Foundation, where lectures are given in halls, schools, and even outdoor areas at night. The attendance, and attention, at lectures is always high, and the information is always very well received. Whenever possible, the lectures are also given before any clinics, so that diagnoses, blood pressure measurements, and lifestyle advice is better understood. The feedback and questions from villagers is always positive, and lectures often stimulate many more questions. Over the past year, around 6400 children, adults, teacher, and health professionals have heard these lectures.

A list of campaigns can be found at the back of the newsletter. Please note that most of these lectures will now be organised under the supervision of the Ladakh Institute of Prevention.

International Seminars

In November 2003, Lama Chogyal was invited by the Tokyo Woman Medical University at the 4th International Symposium on Chronobiology.

Lama Chogyal was also invited to participate in a half hour radio program broadcasted on BBS Radio, in South Korea. Lama Chogyal then had the unique opportunity to present most of the LHF activities in Ladakh, addressing a broad auditory, which gave good results as the Koreans did respond in a very positive way, including some very helpful donations.

Village Clinics and Health Camps

Over the course of the past year, approximately 700 patients have been seen in village clinics, as part of the out-reach programme. We have been able to dispense free medicines for a very wide variety of ailments, and feel that a large impact can be made on each individual's quality of life, through schemes such as these. The clinics are always very popular.



Lecture given by Dr. Norboo, Physician



Clinic Photo

Patient Register

The maintenance of the patient register is an on-going project. At present we are maintaining a database of 135 patients suffering from Rheumatic Heart Disease, which is

important both for the monitoring of the condition of these individuals, and as a resource for research into the condition.

Fortunately, over the past two years there have been only three new cases of rheumatic heart disease (only three over the past year), and this is a reduction that we have tried to achieve through the provision of free Penidure (Benzopenicillin) injections at hospitals, clinics and village centres for those with symptoms that are suggestive of a streptococcal throat infection. Though this steady reduction in cases is welcome, we are aiming for a total eradication of new cases over the next few years, through continuing increased awareness and education, and the availability of suitable medicines.

We also maintain registers of patients with other conditions, monitoring 84 individuals with Congenital Heart Disease, 22 individuals with serious Arrhythmia, and 23 cases of Coronary Artery Disease, as well as 4 individuals now registered under the new database about neurological cases, such as those that follow a stroke, as we feel that this is intrinsically linked with heart disease, and therefore the aims of the Foundation.

Construction Site



Plan for the Heart Foundation site

The construction site is progressing steadily. From merely the first floor this time last year, we have added the whole of the second floor, constructed a well 170m deep to provide a reliable and clean water supply, and now have a connection to electricity and telephone. The army also gave a loan of a bulldozer, allowing the leveling of the rest of the site, while the forest department already concretized its pledge to plant approximately 1000 trees around the hospital.

Another good news is that the construction of the guesthouse is progressing as well, most of the first floor being almost completed at this time. This guesthouse is very important to us, as it is going to facilitate most of invited specialists and medical volunteer's accommodation.



Ramp of the hospital



Second floor under construction



Guest house nearly complete

We hope to complete most of the main building by the end of the summer season, in one and a half months time, but this is very much dependent upon the resources accessible to us, considering that most of the material costs increased considerably in the last months.



Planted by Govt. forest Department this year



The Ladakh Heart Foundation also wants to inform its members and donators about the list of requirements for the registration of the LHF Hospital under section 4 of the J&K State Nursing home and Clinical Establishment Registration and Licensing (Act. 1963). The required parameters are the following:

1. Official name of the establishment with specifications about the owners and management
2. Documents about land allotted and building design
3. Specifications concerning full time resident doctors and their certificates
4. Specifications about paramedical and nursing staff, and their certificates
5. Arrangements regarding blood transfusion processes
6. Investigation facilities
7. Full list of medical equipment, Surgery Theater included
8. Resuscitation and life saving related equipment
9. Specifications about ambulances
10. Biomedical waste disposal
11. Arrangements in case of electricity breakdowns

Any help regarding those requirements will be welcomed and highly appreciated, particularly regarding numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Heart Surgery



Surgery by Dr. Sampath Kumar



Echo diagnosis by Dr. Mishra

Over the past years, we have financially assisted many patients in the costs of their surgery at the All India Institute of Medical Studies (AIIMS) in Delhi. Lama Chogyal and Lama Lobzang used to fly to Delhi to help with the admission of some of these patients. We continue to maintain a close relationship with the AIIMS Cardiology department, which ensures that the few patients we still send down are admitted immediately, without paying to stay in Delhi while on the waiting list. However, over the past year, LHF has tried to put more emphasis on the clinics given each year by Professor Kumar (cardiovascular surgeon) and Dr. Mishra (cardiologist) from AIIMS at the government hospital in Leh (SNM Hospital), whose expenses is paid by the Ladakh Heart Foundation. Over the course of a few days, difficult diagnoses can be made, surgical need can be assessed, and surgical follow-up can be ensured- hundreds of patients are seen, removing the need of a costly journey to Delhi for many of them, which explains our interest for those clinics. Regarding those patients who still have to travel to Delhi, they have to pay only for supplies used in the operation, particularly the cost of the valve, while the services of the doctors and nurses and the hospital bed are free.

Some of the patients require blood transfusions during surgery, and this is very kindly donated by some of the Ladakhi students, monks, and other Ladakhi residents in Delhi. The Ladakh Buddhist Vihara in Delhi also often supplies accommodation in Delhi at little or no cost.

After last year successful attempts to perform Patent Ductus Arteriosus closures, which saved the patients a lot of expenses and allowed the training of surgeons in Leh to perform the same procedure, Professor Kumar performed patent Ductus Arteriosus surgery on a similar number of patients in SNM Hospital on 17th & 18th of August 2004. A young married woman, mother of 3 month old baby suffering from left atrial myxoma was taken down to AIIMS New Delhi and was operated free of cost at the AIIMS New Delhi by Prof. Sampath Kumar. The timely diagnosis and prompt surgical treatment certainly saved this young woman's life. Otherwise she was certain to die in few months.

Individual Sponsorships

Henk Thomas, from Holland, has sponsored the surgery of a young child as well as a young woman who both required treatment in Delhi, the first one with a congenital heart lesion, and the other with rheumatic heart disease. The child is now doing quite well but, unfortunately, the woman's surgery couldn't be performed, mainly because of her unstable health status. She is now getting better and, hopefully, we should be able to carry on this surgery next year... Many thanks for Henk's continued support.

Other Projects

About the up bringing of three Muslim siblings from the remote village of Igo, who were all born blind and that we used to sponsor, we are still considering to bear the expenses of their education in a school for the blind in Delhi, but not before we open a new account for them, involving at least three bearers, including Lama Chogyal, Dr Norboo as well as a woman doctor. Photos of the beneficiaries are awaited as this are required for opening an account in the bank. This measure had to be taken following suspicions toward the father reliability and honesty, and mainly to ensure that the money will reach the three siblings and fulfill their basic needs. This sponsorship is only possible through the donations from Singaporean groups.

LHF has also been able to support two research projects which has resulted in publication of two scientific papers. The first paper, entitled "*Mini review of high altitude health problems in Ladakh*" was first presented at the 3rd International symposium workshop on circadian rhythms and clinical chronotherapy, held in Tokyo, Japan, in November 2002, and was published in 2004 in *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy*, a well-known journal of medicine. The second article entitled "cardio-pulmonary function in high altitude residents of Ladakh" is published in *Journal of high altitude medicine and biology*.

Our support group in Geneva Les Amis de Ladakh Heart Foundation continues to make generous donations for this construction of Ladakh Heart Foundation Hospital building. Their contribution this year has been CHF 4000/- special thanks for Mujin Sunim and Mr Vincent Schmid and donors.

The good news is that another group, this time from Italia, has shown its interest in supporting LHF in its on-going activities. This new support group will probably be set up before the end of this year. Ladakh Heart Foundation also gratefully acknowledge the receipt of donation of \$1000/- from Mr. Borroni Gigi and Mrs. Leela of Italy this year.

Our founder member Mujin Sunim continues her effort for Ladakh Heart Foundation's welfare. It is through her good offices that Mrs. Seema Kumar's Society donated £ 4000 for Ladakh Heart Foundation. We profusely thanks Mrs. Seema Kumar and the member of her society for the generous support. Through the good offices of Prof. Sampath Kumar Mr. & Mrs. Vinod K. Wazir sent Ladakh Heart Foundation a donation of Rs. 70,000/- (Rupees Seventy Thousand only). We profusely thank them for the generous donation.

Campaign

Date	Activities
02/05/02	- Location: Ladakh Buddhist Association, Leh. Series of lectures, attended by around 1000 lamas and nuns, by Dr Norboo in co-operation with government health department. Topics covered included: hypertension, diabetes, obesity, diet, and stomach cancer.
17/04/04	- Location: Lamdon Higher Secondary School, Leh. Health awareness program, lecture given by Dr. Norboo and attended by nearly 300 students. Topics covered : Introduction to series of Lectures on Health and environment in future.
26/4/04	- Girls Higher Secondary School Leh, Introductory lecture on series of talks to be given in schools on Health and environment principal, the staff and students participated.
15/5/04	- Mahabodhi High School Choglamsar: A lecture on prevention of air - pollution - tobacco smoking - passive smoking - environmental and occupational air pollution. 150 students and teachers participated in a lively discussion following the talk.
22/05/04	- Location: Moravian Mission School, Leh. (Forenoon) Health awareness program, lecture and slide presentation given by Dr. Norboo and attended by nearly 100 students. Topics covered: prevention or air pollution in home, workplace, institutions and open environment (dust pneumoconiosis prevalence), tobacco history, constituents and prevalence of smoking, nicotine addiction, withdrawal syndrome, short and long term effects of tobacco, cessation program, counseling, passive smoking, tobacco advertisement and other strategies of tobacco companies.
29/5/04	- Islamia school Leh - Health awareness programme on clean air and prevention of air pollution. About 100 students participated. Dr. Norboo Lecture was followed by lively discussion by Students and teachers.
6/7/04	- A well planned health check up cum high altitude resident physical appearance study cum treatment clinic and health education drive was conducted on 6th and 7th July, at Hanley. 200 subjects were studied in detail. The findings finally analysed will be beneficial for planning remedies for common health problems of this area.

This area has been experiencing water and food borne disease in epidemic form - this time we investigated into this epidemic - Entero - haemorrhagic E-coli infection. Samples of drinking water from different sources were taken for bacterial and mineral content analysis. Health education was mainly devoted to hygiene of food, food handlers and surroundings.

25-29/8/04 - Under the joint supervision of Dr. Otsuka Kuniaki professor Tokyo women university and Venble T. Chogyal and Dr. T. Norboo consultant Physician LHF & LIP; a detailed health check up of senior citizens of age group 50 and above, young men and women between 20-49 was held on the above mentioned four days. After registration a detailed questionnaire regarding life style, sleep pattern, depression and view on health. Height, weight, measurement for BMI, Blood pressure measurement in sitting, supine and standing position twice each time; were done. Then the senior citizens were carried through series of cognitive function and joint and spine mobility tests like up and go test - functional reach test - button score and kohs test, SpO₂ and Heart rate and time estimation test. Finally all of them under went ECG and Pulse Wave Velocity (PWV) and Ankle Brachial Index test (ABI) for finding the status of Aortic stiffness.



Check up by Dr. Otsuka Kuniaki



PWV for measuring aortic stiffness

These battery of tests done on 230 subjects in four days was the first of its kind in Ladakh organised by L H F and LIP through kind courtesy of Dr. Otsuka Kuniaki and his dedicated team is an important milestone in preventive medicine. This data will be analysed and the observation will be utilized to educate the people in prevention and promotion of health of the population.

This will now on be a continuous activity of L H F and LIP.

our Bank AC 01050080082 state Bank of India Leh, Code no: 1365
 AC in Geneve Les amis de Ladakh heart foundation C/o Mr Vincent schmid case postale 1272 1227
 carouge ge , AC no R 3247.08.90 compte courant CHF Prestation(S) ouverte(S):



New Developed area for the LHF site



LHF Hospital under construction