

ICTPH's work on Primary Healthcare

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ICTPH works with field partner in Thanjavur to test concepts of primary healthcare and its integration Nandita Vijay, Bangalore

IKP Centre for Technologies in Public Health (ICTPH), a non-governmental organization(NGO), is working with a field based partner in Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu to field-test its concepts on provision of primary care and integration of care across higher levels.

The changes that would be necessary in the overall health systems design if we are to succeed in providing high quality health care requires four complementary dimensions covering human resources, infrastructure, interventions and financing, stated Dr Nachiket Mor, director, IKP Centre for Technologies in Public Health (ICTPH) and head, Sughavazhvu Healthcare in Thanjavur.

- Over time we hope to expand the number of engagement partners. On the research and training front, we have partnered with the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Nursing, University of Washington's Brown School of Social Work and Public Health, Adyar Cancer Institute in Chennai, and L. V. Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad. These initiatives will allow us to move closer to a vision of universal and high quality healthcare for all within the financial and human resources available, stated Dr Mor, who was in Bangalore recently for the TB Diagnostics in India Conference held at St. John's Research Institute.

India needs an Essential Health System and Design Innovation. The country has a low supply of physicians that are qualified in allopathic medicine and the few that are qualified are unwilling to serve in remote and challenging locations. The disease burden continues to have a high proportion of infectious diseases like tuberculosis and other chronic diseases, said Dr. Mor.

As a member of the Union government's High Level Expert Committee on Universal Health Care, Dr Mor is of

the view that India could have access to affordable and quality healthcare only if radical changes are made in the manner in which this sector is financed.

Primary healthcare must be available close to where people live. In addition, higher levels of care, while easily available and accessible to citizens, must be closely integrated with primary care and focused on the whole individual. The financing, risk sharing and referral mechanisms must act in work to ensure that this happens. Spain in the developed world and Thailand in the developing world are health systems models which India should emulate in healthcare.

The research work being carried out at ICTPH is dedicated to developing viable models for making this vision a reality in the Indian context. While viable solutions do exist they need to be found with multiple components of design working closely together. India has done a relatively good job of addressing challenges at the secondary and tertiary care level, as evidenced by the growing medical tourism industry, on the twin dimensions of provision of Primary care and integration of care across higher levels.

The focus of ICTPH's will be on human resources strategies, advanced point of care diagnostics, health management information systems, and expert architectural designs. These components have the potential to dramatically transform the provision of primary healthcare and the integration of care across levels, she stated.

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