

AROUND THE CITY 5

City nephrologist wins ROYAL COLLEGE FELLOWSHIP

KIDNEY rackets cannot be controlled by stringent laws but its possible to curb them by preventing kidney problems says Dr Rajan Ravichandran, Nephrologist. The director of Madras Institute of Nephrology at Vijaya Health center, Dr Ravichandran, says 'that diabetes and blood pressure are some of the main causes of kidney problems that finally lead to kidney failures, quoting from a WHO report that says 'Diabetes is an epidemic in India.' If steps are taken to prevent renal diseases, there will be no place for kidney rackets, he says.

Dr Ravichandran, who has been practicing for the past 22 years was recently nominated for a fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians. The fellowship of

the Royal college (FRCP) is an honour that is given to doctors across the world taking into consideration not just their contribution in the scientific field but also their social committment. He will be officially honoured in July at the Royal College, Edinburgh. The honour is given to doctors after being recommended by an existing senior member of the college along with a second person.

Explaining about the stem cell research, which is one of the main areas of continuous research in the medical field for the past few years, Dr Ravichandran states that such a research is only in an experimental stage and India has a long way to go. "Only blood cells are harvested in India. We are yet to experiment on embryonic cells," he says. He also stated that the country lacks even in providing reliable basic information like results of a simple blood test. The quality of dialysis is poor and promotion of cardvere transplation is also less. "All these are the major problems that the country is facing," says the doctor.

He also mentioned that though India has good infrastructure, the rural areas still suffer. It is one of the main reasons for the lack of proper maintenance of primary health care

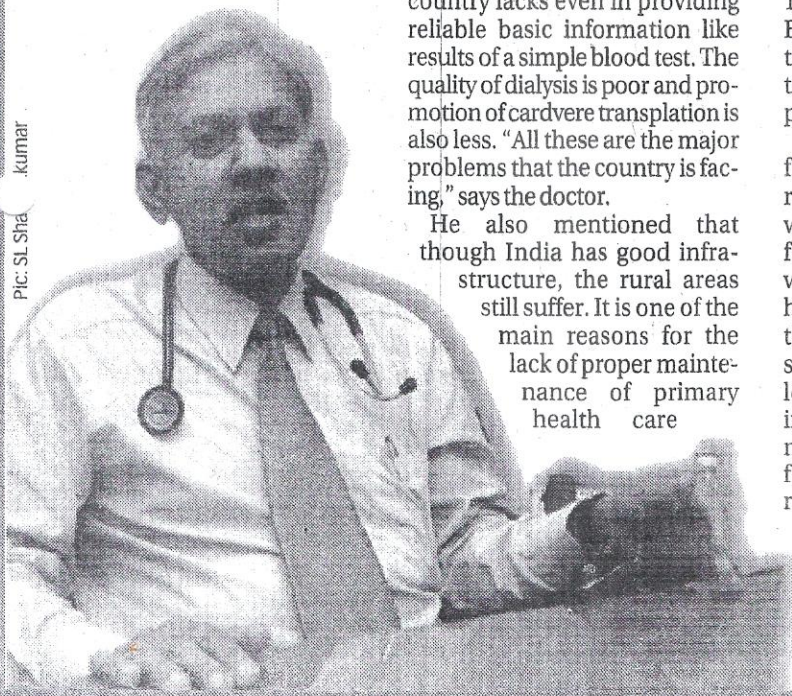
centres. Hence, no doctor would agree to practice in a rural area even if the government insists on increasing the number of years of study for the medical students.

The Madras Institute of Nephrology, an independent unit started in 1989. It has provided treatment for over 20,000 patients with kidney diseases from all over the country and neighbouring countries like Maldives, Srilanka and Bangladesh. The institute has performed more than 1,000 renal transplantation. Today, the institute conducts free medical camps and awareness lectures on kidney diseases regularly in IT companies and other government departments.

Dr Ravichandran headed the department of Nephrology in Voluntary Health Services from 1985 to 89. In 1997, he started the Balaji Medical and Educational trust that has been providing free treatment and medicines for patients.

Dr Ravichandran is also a professor and has been doing research work in collaboration with IIT. He is expecting a patent for his research work. He, along with IIT Professor Shankaraman has found a phosphate binder that can remove harmful substances due to kidney failures. "A lot of phosphorus accumulates in the kidney when there is a kidney failure and we have now found some resins that can remove them. We have already tested it on animals and the next stage would be human testing," says Dr Ravichandran.

— U Tejonmayam



Pic: S1 Sha .kumar