

BULLETIN HIGHLIGHTS

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EMPATHY IN MEDICAL EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

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Introduction:

The introduction of the AETCOM (Attitude, Ethics, and Communication) module in India highlights the growing importance of empathy in developing patient-centered healthcare professionals. Empathy is a core component of medical practice, enabling physicians to understand and share patients' experiences. Clinical empathy¹ comprises four dimensions: cognitive (understanding the patient's perspective), emotional (resonating with feelings), moral (motivation to empathize), and behavioral (communicating empathy effectively). Together, these dimensions help bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and compassionate care, strengthening the patient-physician relationship.

Empathy has been linked to improved clinical outcomes, including better patient trust, disclosure, treatment adherence, and management of chronic conditions such as diabetes. It also contributes to physician well-being by reducing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction. However, sustaining empathy during medical training remains challenging, as several studies report a decline with advancing years due to increased workload, clinical pressures, and emphasis on biomedical aspects of care. Nonetheless, findings are mixed, with some studies showing stable or improved empathy levels influenced by factors such as gender, specialty preference, and cultural context.

Given the vital role of empathy in shaping patient outcomes and professional satisfaction, there is a need to understand how empathy evolves during medical training. This study seeks to survey empathy levels in medical students across all years of their education and explore trends and factors influencing empathy to provide insights that could inform policies to foster and sustain empathy in medical education.

Methodology:

This cross-sectional study assessed empathy among undergraduate and postgraduate medical students in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana using a Google Forms survey distributed via virtual snowball sampling. Empathy was measured with the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ), a reliable 16-item scale (score range 0–64; ≥ 45 indicating good empathy). Consenting medical and dental students across all years, internship, and postgraduate training were included, while incomplete responses were excluded; ethical approval was obtained. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests ($p < 0.05$) with SPSS v22.

Results:

The current research focuses on the evaluation of levels of empathy among a sample of 409 medical and dental students. Socio-demographic details of the sample are presented in Table – 1.

Table 1: Socio-demographic details of the sample (N=409)

Socio-demographic and professional parameters		N = 409	%
Age (Mean +/- SD)		20.72 +/- 2.02	-
Gender	Male	139	33.99
	Female	270	66.01
Course	MBBS	388	94.86
	BDS	21	5.13
Year of Study	First-year	134	32.76
	Second Year	140	34.23
	Third year	51	12.47
	Fourth-year	48	11.73
	Internship	26	6.35
	Post-graduation	10	2.44
Branch interested in	Unsure	10	2.4
	Pre or Para clinical	31	7.6
	Medical	187	45.7
	Surgical	162	39.6
	Psychiatry	19	4.6

Based on TEQ, the study subjects were categorized into two groups: “below average empathy” and “good empathy.” Of the sample, 208 (50.9%) were found to have below-average empathy, while 201 (49.1%) had good empathy levels (Figure 1). There is varied proportion of students with below-average and good empathy across different professional years. (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Levels of Empathy in the study sample (N=409)

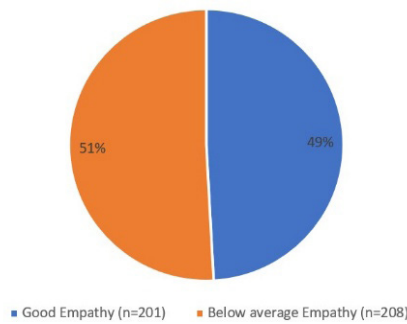


Figure 2: Levels of Empathy among the sample based on the current year of the course (N=409)

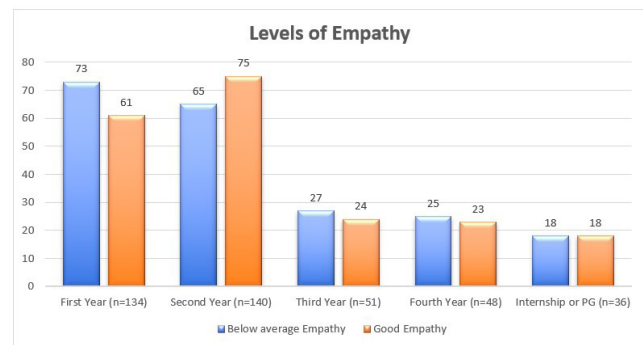


Table – 2 shows the association between gender, year of the study, course, and speciality interested in with levels of empathy.

Table 2: Association of various parameters with levels of empathy (N=409)

		Below average Empathy (n= 208)	Good Empathy (n=201)	Chi-square	P value
Gender	Male (n=139)	87	52	11.600	0.001*
	Female (n=270)	121	149		
Year of Study	First-year (n=134)	73	61	2.483	0.78
	Second Year (n=140)	65	75		

	Third year (n=51)	27	24		
	Fourth-year (n=48)	25	23		
	Internship or PG (n=36)	18	18		
Course	MBBS (n=388)	196	192	0.350	0.55
	BDS (n=21)	12	9		
Specialty interested in	Pre or Para clinical (n=31)	15	16	2.514	0.64
	Medical (n=187)	103	84		
	Surgical (n=162)	76	86		
	Psychiatry (n=19)	9	10		
	Unsure (n=10)	5	5		

*P-value < 0.05 is considered as statistically significant; Chi-square test is used.

Discussion:

The present study reaffirms established gender differences in empathy, with female students demonstrating significantly higher empathy levels than males. This finding is consistent with earlier research (Brar et al., 2024; Murthy et al., 2014), which also reports greater empathy among females, often attributed to evolutionary (Darwinian) perspectives. In line with previous literature, empathy showed an increase from the first to the second academic year—coinciding with initial clinical exposure—followed by a decline; however, this trend was not statistically significant. Notably, unlike many prior studies, no significant decline in empathy across academic years was observed, challenging the commonly described phenomenon of “empathy erosion” during medical training.

A systematic review by Patel et al. (2019) highlights that empathy often declines in clinical years due to increased workload and stress, emphasizing the need for targeted empathy training. The stability observed in this study may reflect institution-specific or regional influences, such as curricula that actively promote empathic engagement alongside clinical learning. Additionally, no significant association was found between specialty preference and empathy levels, contrasting with findings by Watari et al., where students inclined toward patient-centered specialties demonstrated higher empathy. This discrepancy may be explained by cultural variations in specialty perception or the early stage of career decision-making among participants.

Being a cross-sectional study, limited to a couple of states in India, the majority sample being from MBBS students, and huge variations in the number of students who participated from each academic year hinder the generalizability of our results. The virtual snowball sampling method itself has sampling bias and limited generalizability. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine shifts in empathy over time and assess the effectiveness of educational strategies designed to cultivate and maintain empathy among medical students.

Conclusion:

The findings align with the goals of India’s AETCOM model and emphasize the potential impact of cultural, regional, and institutional factors. They highlight its potential to sustain empathy in medical students and counteract empathy erosion. Consistent gender-based differences reflect global trends, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches. Future longitudinal studies should assess the AETCOM model’s long-term impact on nurturing empathy and improving patient-centered care.

Disclosure Statement: The authors report no conflict of interest. This manuscript is published in Telangana Journal of Psychiatry on 21-06-2025 (DOI:10.4103/tjp.tjp_13_25).

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CASE REPORT: METASTATIC CLEAR CELL RENAL CELL CARCINOMA TO THE THYROID-AN INCIDENTAL DISCOVERY

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3 Professor Surgery | 4 Second year Post Graduate Pathology

Introduction:

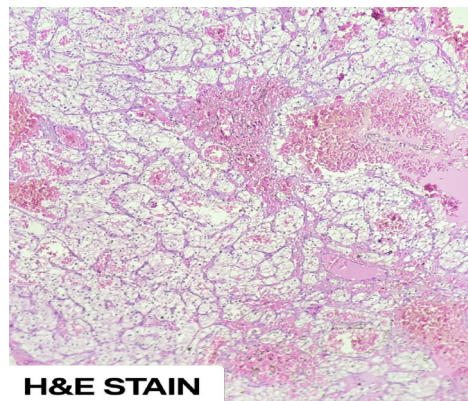
Metastases to the thyroid are rare, with renal cell carcinoma(RCC) being an uncommon source. Incidence of RCC metastases to the Thyroid is 0.64%, with a Mortality rate of 94%. We present this case report on Metastatic Clear Cell Renal Cell Carcinoma (RCC) to the thyroid gland, discovered incidentally in an elderly female patient with a prior history of nephrectomy.

Case Details:

A 75 year-old female, who had undergone a right nephrectomy years prior and remained asymptomatic, came to surgery OPD with complaints of swelling in front of neck which was further evaluated and Hemi-Thyroidectomy was done.

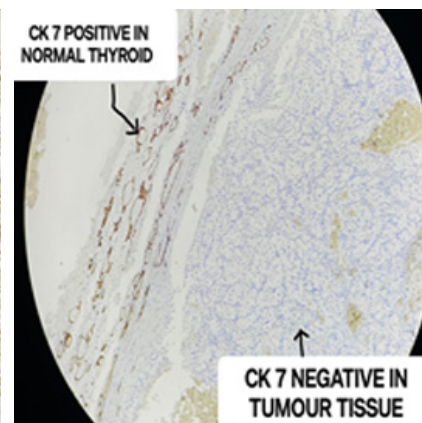
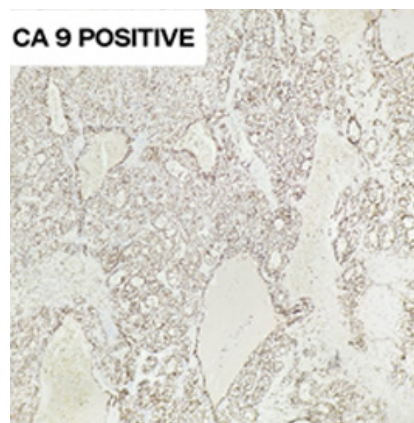
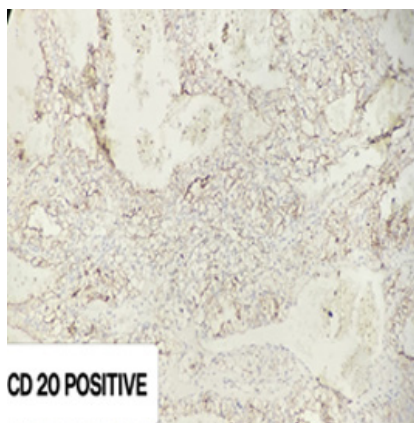
Gross Examination:

Lobectomy specimen was received in 10% neutral buffer formalin by Dept of Pathology. specimen measured 4x3x3cm. The cut section revealed a greyish yellow area replacing the normal thyroid. Central area of Grey brown cystic changes noted.



HPE:

Sections studied show well encapsulated thyroid tissue with sheets of clear cells, few of them arranged in trabecular pattern. Individual cells are round to oval with a hyperchromatic nucleus with clear cytoplasm. Also noted normal thyroid follicles.



Discussion:

Cancers that metastasize to the thyroid gland are uncommon, despite their rich vascular supply. On the other hand, RCC is known for its tendency to give metastases may be the Batson's venous plexus between the vertebral and epidural venous systems that facilitates the spread of the metastasizing process. These venous systems are valveless and offer an easy way for metastatic cells to spread with low resistance. Increase in intra-abdominal and thoracic pressure causes retrograde flow in these veins. This plexus allows cancerous RCC to bypass the pulmonary capillary filtration and metastasizes into the head and neck organs.

Conclusion:

Metastasis of renal cell carcinoma (RCC) to the thyroid is rare but should always be considered in patients with a renal history, even many years after nephrectomy. Thyroid metastasis can mimic primary thyroid tumors clinically, radiologically, and cytologically. Detailed clinical history, awareness of the possibility of late metastasis, and use of immunohistochemistry are essential for accurate diagnosis.

References:

1. Shepherd M et al. (2022) Case Report: Metastatic renal cell carcinoma to the thyroid—A rare encounter. *Front. Surg.* 9:1000425.
2. Valdez, C et al. Metastatic renal cell carcinoma to the thyroid 23 years after nephrectomy. *Urology Case Reports*, 2(4), 129-130.

CASE REPORT: EMPYEMA NECESSITANS -A RARE CASE REPORT

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3 - Professor, General Surgery | 4 - Professor & HOD, General Surgery*

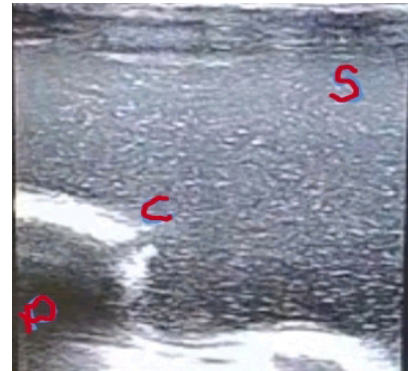
Introduction:

Empyema necessitans (EN) is a rare complication of empyema thoracis in which pus erodes through the perital plura into the chest wall forming a subcutaneous abscess.

EN is uncommon in modern practice due to wide spread antibiotic use, But it is classically associated with chronic infections like Tuberculosis and Actinomycosis, which requires prolonged antibiotic usage and surgical debridement in recurrent cases.

Case Presentation:

A 25-year-old female presented with swelling over the right posterior chest wall for three months. History of treated pulmonary tuberculosis three years earlier. Examination showed a 15 × 12 cm cystic tender swelling extending from anterior to posterior axillary line on to scapular and infrascapular areas on Rt side of the chest. Fluctuation present, Expansile cough impulse present nonpulsatile, nonreducible. Respiratory exam revealed dull percussion note over right basal lung region.



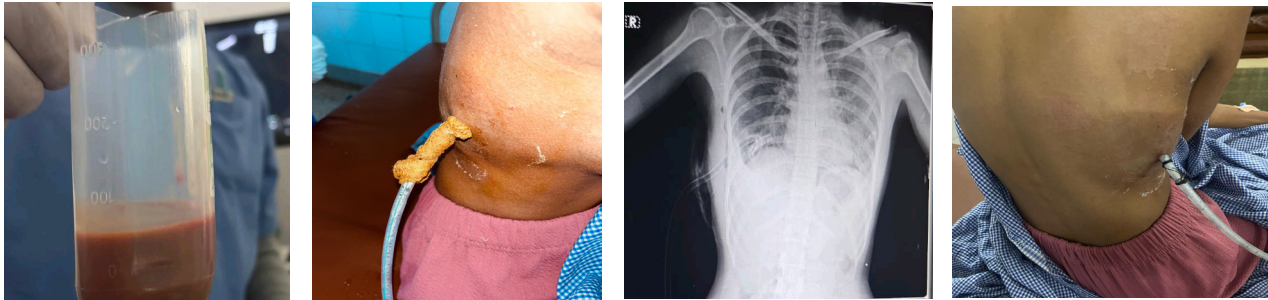
Investigations:

Blood investigations with mildly elevated inflammatory markers. Chest imaging showed pleural collection extending into chest wall soft tissues. Ultrasonography revealed cystic collection with internal echoes suggestive of abscess and communication with pleural cavity.

Treatment:

Ultrasoundguided aspiration drained approximately 300 ml purulent fluid. Samples sent for microbiological analysis. Broad spectrum antibiotics started and antitubercular therapy continued.

Recurrence of collection required intercostal drainage tube insertion with subsequent improvement.

**Discussion:**

Empyema necessitans occurs when untreated empyema dissects through the parietal pleura into surrounding tissues. Tuberculosis remains an important cause in endemic regions. process can take weeks to months, patients often have chronic symptoms before chest wall involvement become evident, it can be accompanied by rib osteomyelitis or extension into pericardium and abdomen in severe cases in above case tuberculosis is causative organism benefits from drainage plus standard 6-9 months TB chemotherapy all cases multidisciplinary care is advised , involving pulmonologists, microbiologists and surgeons. Early imaging, prompt drainage, and appropriate antimicrobial therapy are essential for good outcomes. In chronic & recurrent cases requires surgical decortication of pluera.

Conclusion:

Chest wall swelling with underlying pleural collection should raise suspicion of empyema necessitans. Tuberculosis remains an important cause in endemic areas Early diagnosis and prompt drainage with antimicrobial therapy lead to favorable outcomes.

References:

1. Kasper DL et al. Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine. 21st Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Education; 2022. Chapter: Pleural Effusion, Empyema, and Lung Abscess.
2. Townsend CM et al. Sabiston Textbook of Surgery: The Biological Basis of Modern Surgical Practice. 21st Edition. Elsevier; 2022. Chapter: Diseases of the Pleura.
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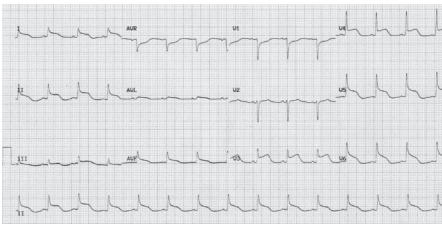


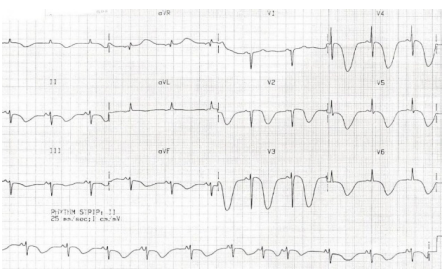
“He who studies medicine without books sails an uncharted sea, but he who studies medicine without patients does not go to sea at all.”

— William Osler

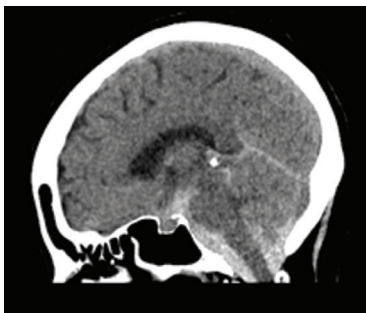
QUIZ

1. 18-year old female with severe traumatic brain injury, ICP 40mmHg. Fluctuating BPs. Describe and interpret her ECG.

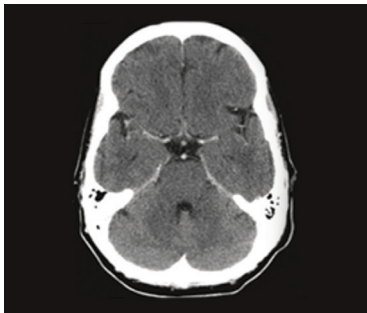
	<p>Above ECG @ admission</p> <p>Q1. Identify and describe the specific ECG abnormalities.</p> <p>Q2. What is the likely mechanism / Patho -physiology of the above specific abnormal.</p> <p>Q3. What are the specific 2D-ECHO findings expected (abnormal)?</p> <p>Q4. How do you describe the status of the heart?</p> <p>Q5. Discuss at least three principles of Mx.</p>
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	<p>Below ECG after relative stabilization</p> <p>Q1. Identify and describe the specific ECG abnormalities.</p> <p>Q2. Does any CAD mimics the below ECG?</p> <p>Q3. What is the mechanism of serious life threatening dysrhythmia possible?</p> <p>Q4. What is the mechanism of PSM(Pan Systolic Murmur in this case)?</p> <p>Q5. Does any substance abuse mimic this condition?</p>
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2. A 30-year-old female presents with 12 hours duration of headache and progressive drowsiness. A non-contrast CT scan of the brain is performed.



PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3

- Q1. Mention the specific abnormal findings (Picture wise 1,2,3)
- Q2. What are the ECG abnormalities may be present in this patient?
- Q3. Discuss at least four principles of management.
- Q4. How a Lumbar puncture can help for diagnosis?
- Q5. Who are the specialists who can help in the management of this condition?
- Q6. Does the stellate ganglion block helpful in this condition of the patient?

Complete answers to be communicated to
kims.bulletin.journal@gmail.com
 before **25.04.2026**.
 Names of the students who answer the quiz correctly will be
 published in the next Medical Times issue

EVENTS, SERVICE ACTIVITIES AT KIMS, NARKETPALLY



Guest Lecture by **Dr. P.Pavani Murthy**, on “Beyond Glasses: The Science Of Laser Vision Correction And The Challenge Of Keratoconus” on **27th January 2026**



Sensitisation Programme on **Pharmacovigilance and Adverse Drug Reaction** was conducted by the Department of Pharmacology, KIMS Narketpally and Vikas Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Suryapet on **10.02.2026**.



Under the auspices of the Department of Psychiatry, Kamineni Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Narketpally, a state-level psychiatric conference titled **“When Habits Take Over: Insights into Behavioral Addictions”** was conducted on **21.02.2026** in response to the growing impact of modern lifestyle changes and the widespread use of digital technology on mental health.



Bringing Healthcare to the Doorstep – A Successful Home-Based Intervention

Family Adoption Program under the supervision of the Dept. of Community Medicine, by our MBBS Students

The success of these home visits demonstrates that **healthcare delivery at the patient’s doorstep** is not only feasible but essential, especially for the elderly and immobile population. The Family Adoption Programme serves as a **vital tool in achieving comprehensive and inclusive primary healthcare**.



Screen Time Awareness and Assessment programme conducted by the Sree Vidhyapeeth School and Department of Paediatrics, KIMS Narketpally from:31-1-2026 to 2-2-2026.



On Sunday, March 29th, 2026, the Department of Radiology at KIMS, Narketpally, organized a CPD on “Multisystem Approach to Radiology”



Nurturing mental wellbeing: simple steps to overcome exam phobia and build confidence.

A session on the topic was taken for undergraduate students at TGSWRDC (W) college, Cherlapally on 17.03.2026 by Dr. Sravanthi and Dr. Dharaneedhar from the Dept. of Psychiatry. More than 200 students attended the session.



Guest Lecture by **Dr. Kishore Ranade, MD, FAAN, CIME, FAAMA**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Neurology, Newyork Medical College, Valhalla, on **How to Evaluate the commonest hospital neurological presentation, quick neurological examination and neurological emergencies on 17.02.2026.**



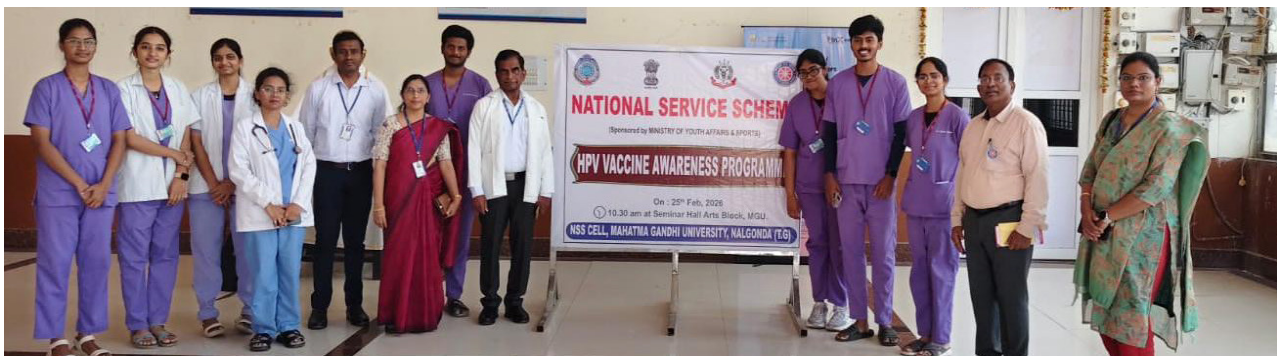
World Cancer Day Awareness Program on 4th February 2026, by the Department of General Medicine

Village Awareness Walk: The program commenced with a flagship "Awareness Walk" through the local community. Faculty members, residents, and students marched in solidarity, utilizing bilingual banners and placards to disseminate information on early warning signs and the importance of screening. This grassroots outreach successfully engaged hundreds of residents, demystifying the stigma often associated with a cancer diagnosis.

Art Competition, Skit on Cancer Awareness, Interactive Doubt-Clearing Session were also conducted.



On Saturday, March 7th, 2026, the Department of De-Addiction and the Department of Psychiatry at the Kamineni Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Narketpally, jointly organized a comprehensive Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. Held at the Dhanvantari Lecture Hall, the event centered on the theme **"Horizons in Addiction Medicine: Contemporary Treatment and Recovery."**



Cancer & HPV Vaccine Awareness Program, Organized by Dept. of OBG in Coordination with NSS Cell, Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda, on **25.02.2026**. The session, led by the Professor & HOD Dr. Sunita Sudhir and Professor Dr. Rama Rao, was engaging and received positive feedback from the participants. Vaccination Awareness Skit was conducted by Interns of KIMS Narketpally, under the supervision of PGs Dr. Sai Kiranmayi, Dr. Vineela and Dr. Roshini. Approximately 200 UG and PG students from Mahatma Gandhi University attended the program. The Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Dr. Althaf Hussain, Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda appreciated and thanked the Kamineni Hospital team for conducting the awareness program at the university campus.



Towards a Leprosy-Free Society – Addressing Misconceptions as a Challenge.

An awareness program on Leprosy elimination was successfully conducted under the Department of Dermatology at KIMS, Narketpally, on **30th January 2026** with an aim to increase public awareness about leprosy, emphasise early detection, and highlight the importance of timely treatment to prevent disability.



World Tuberculosis Day was conducted on 24th March 2026, by the Dept of Pulmonology, with the nursing college faculty & students, with a theme **“Yes! We can end TB!”**

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS



Launch of the Fifth Edition of the Manipal Manual of Clinical Paediatrics, authored by Dr. Kafeel Khan, Professor in Pediatrics.



Dr. Kafeel Khan, Professor of Pediatrics, has been awarded 1st Prize in E-poster presentation at PEDICON – 2026, conducted on 16th – 20th January at Kolkata.



Dr. Penubarthi Sravanthi, Associate Professor in Psychiatry, has received the prestigious Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Excellence Award in Psychiatry a recognition that holds immense significance in her professional journey.

RECENT ADVANCES: RECENT ADVANCES RE-EMERGENCE OF COTRIMOXAZOLE IN MODERN CLINICAL PRACTICE

By Dept. of Pharmacology, KIMS, Narketpally

Cotrimoxazole, a fixed-dose combination of trimethoprim and sulfamethoxazole, remains an important antimicrobial agent in modern clinical practice. The drug works through sequential inhibition of bacterial folate synthesis, producing a synergistic antibacterial effect. Because of its good oral bioavailability, affordability, and broad antimicrobial spectrum, cotrimoxazole continues to be useful particularly in resource-limited healthcare settings.

Important Clinical Uses

- Drug of choice for **Pneumocystis jirovecii pneumonia (PCP)**
- Effective in **nocardiosis** and opportunistic infections
- Useful in selected **urinary tract infections**
- Used in **respiratory and gastrointestinal infections** when organisms are susceptible
- **Increasingly used for Community-acquired skin and soft tissue infection caused by MRSA.**

The emergence of antimicrobial resistance has reduced empirical use of cotrimoxazole in some infections, emphasizing the need for culture-guided therapy and antimicrobial stewardship. Although generally safe, adverse reactions such as hypersensitivity reactions, hematological toxicity, and renal effects may occur and require monitoring.

Key Takeaway

Cotrimoxazole remains a **cost effective, accessible, and clinically valuable antibiotic**. Its inclusion in the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM 2022)** highlights its continued importance in modern healthcare and antimicrobial stewardship.

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