

## **Institutional Best Practices**

### **TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CADAVERIC OATH**

The cadaveric oath taking ceremony represents a distinctive manner in which medical students express their profound respect and gratitude towards the donors and their families.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE:**

To create a sense of awareness among fresh medical students to respect the cadaver as their first teacher.

To help the students develop empathy towards the cadaver and in the long run with the patients while serving the humanity by way of medical practice

#### **THE CONTEXT:**

Shock, anxiety, apprehension, nausea, or dizziness are negative emotional or physical reactions experienced by several medical students who experienced death fear during their first encounter. To help students overcome these emotional experiences, memorial ceremonies of gratitude to cadaver donors are organised to promote humanistic values such as empathy, altruism and heighten students' feelings of gratitude, responsibility and responsibility.

#### **THE PRACTICE:**

Cadaveric Oath is a pledge which the students recite on the opening day of Anatomy learning, to pay tributes to the soul, to respect the dignity and integrity of the human remains that they are about to work on. With an in-depth understanding of its significance, the institution has initiated the Cadaveric Oath ceremony since 2021.

The first-year medical students are initially sensitized on respectful handling of cadaver through interactive-sessions and ethical approach towards cadaver on the first day of anatomy dissection, following which they are made to render cadaveric oath. Subsequent to oath taking, a questionnaire to assess their perceptions of cadaveric oath ceremony is administered on students and their responses are obtained in a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 5-strongly agree to 1- strongly disagree) on the following:

- Cadaveric dissection is indispensable for anatomy learning.
- Student - cadaver relationship serves as a simulation for future doctor- patient relationship
- Cadaveric oath ceremony on the first day of anatomy dissection enables to overcome their fears and apprehension.
- This ceremony imbibes values like respect, gratitude, empathy, compassion and care towards their first mortal teacher.
- Cadaveric oath paves path to honour the noble gesture of donors for donating their body for medical education and research which cannot be compared to any of the modern-day virtual dissection tool for anatomy learning.

## **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:**

The responses obtained from the students revealed that cadaveric oath ceremony has helped them to overcome their apprehension, develop empathy towards their silent mentors and execute their duties in a professional manner without personal feelings or emotions. The noble gesture of donors, donating their body for medical education and research cannot be compared to any of the modern-day virtual dissection tools for anatomy learning. Cadaveric oath ceremonies have the potential to inculcate humanistic values among medical students which significantly contribute in creating empathetic doctors of tomorrow through simulation of better doctor-patient relationship.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED**

The medical students have a variety of unfavourable emotional or physical responses, including shock, worry, uncertainty, nausea, and dizziness, especially those students who initially encountered a fear of dying have an interesting emotional reaction. Major resource required is the cadaver, the obtainability of which is a challenge.

## **BEST PRACTICE -2**

### **SOLEMNIZING ANTENATAL/NEWBORN HEALTH ADVOCACY**

The practice of "Valaikappu" ceremony for expectant mothers and gifting new-borns with gold rings is a cherished tradition across cultures, symbolizing luck, love, and protection. Beyond its symbolic meaning, this tradition serves as a reminder to emphasize the importance of antenatal, intra-partum and new-born healthcare.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICE:**

To honour the new-born's heritage and raise awareness about the significance of antenatal and new-born healthcare.

## **THE CONTEXT:**

**Celebrating pregnant women through 'Valaikappu' (Baby shower) and** gifting of gold rings to new-borns serves as a tangible reminder for the family to prioritize and reiterate the importance of maternal and new-born healthcare. The institution has instituted this practice to promote maternal and new-born health and inculcate responsibility in the medical graduates towards antenatal/neonatal health advocacy by emphasizing the value of healthcare during this crucial period.

## **THE PRACTICE:**

The institution had conducted ‘Valaikappu’ ceremonies for more than 102 expectant mothers and had gifted gold rings to more than 500 new-borns from 2017’ to till date with the aim of raising awareness among pregnant women residing in rural communities and nearby areas. The goal was to attract them to the hospital and encourage them to seek continued healthcare services for their well-being and of their unborn child. To achieve the objectives, efforts are taken by the institution to upgrade healthcare networks by providing adequate resources, personnel, counselling, support services, and referrals to specialized care.

This practice focuses on three key aspects:

- Strengthening the primary healthcare network to provide accessible and affordable antenatal and neonatal care.
- Increasing access to financial support by addressing financial barriers through cash assistance, insurance schemes, or subsidies.
- Supporting pregnant women and new mothers through various programs that provide access to health services in the form of free transportation, health education, providing nutritional supplements during every antenatal visit, safe institutional delivery, best in class intrapartum and neonatal care.

#### **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:**

The success of this practice is measured through better antenatal/neonatal care for hundreds of mothers and new-borns. The most important parameters indicating a nation’s healthcare being maternal and infant mortality rate, the institution takes great pride in incorporating maternal healthcare measures which is evident through increase in institutional deliveries, enhanced antenatal and neonatal care particularly in nearby and remote rural communities.

This practice of involving students in a warm ceremony of “Valaikappu” inculcates immense responsibility in the tender minds of young post graduates and interns. The prolific sign is the enhanced involvement, commitment and meticulous participation of the postgraduates and interns in the antenatal and intrapartum care.

#### **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND RESOURCES REQUIRED**

The primary hurdle was ensuring the consistent participation of women in rural communities in receiving antenatal and postnatal healthcare at the hospital. The lack of awareness and understanding among these women and their families about the importance of such healthcare posed a significant challenge. Resources required include the development of community-based programs such as outreach antenatal and post-natal clinics, home visits, and enrolling pregnant mothers in health programs. Additionally, the procurement, storage, and safe distribution of gold rings should be considered.



**First year MBBS students in Cadaveric oath ceremony**





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**இங்கு பிறக்கும் குழந்தைகளுக்கு  
 தங்க மோதிரம் பரிசளிக்கப்படும்.**

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**தங்கள் மகதயில் மருத்துவ மனையில் பிறந்த குழந்தைகளுக்கு தங்கமோதிரம் பரிசளிக்கும் திட்டம்**  
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