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India

Healthcare with a heart: Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences
 Kochi | Sunday, Apr 4 2010 IST

Nestled in the palm-fringed backwaters of Kochi, the Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences and Research represents the fruition of renowned spiritual leader Mata Amritanandamayi's dream of providing a world-class institution to impart healthcare to the needy in Kerala.

Since its inception 11 years ago, the Institute has grown from a small hospital to a 1000 bed super-speciality healthcare centre, medical college and graduate training centre.

The main hospital comprises 600,000 square feet of floor space and is situated on a 80-acre campus. It has 22 operating theatres and 1000 patient beds, 172 of which are intensive care beds. There are 50 departments, 540 faculty, 100 administrators, 2300 support staff and 500 volunteers. There are additional 400 patient beds in the Teaching Hospital Complex next to the main hospital.

This massive healthcare infrastructure supports a patient volume of 800-1200 outpatients and an average of 750 inpatients daily.

Annual patient turnover touches 300,000 outpatients and over 35,000 inpatients, AIMS officials told reporters.

In the first six years of AIMS' existence, 980,000 patients of them nearly 98,000 were inpatients received [medical services](#). The beneficiary, who received either free or concessional treatment, accounted for 63 per cent and even the remaining 37 per cent enjoyed highly subsidised treatment. Out of 60,000 [surgeries](#) performed, approximately 25,000 were either totally free or concessional.

A free drug bank is functioning in the hospital campus where patients who cannot afford to purchase the medicines prescribed to them, are supplied with their drugs totally free of cost. This all amounts to Rs 73 crore in charity towards healthcare services alone.

AIMS features one of the most advanced hospital computer networks in India, comprising of 1200 workstations. Nearly every aspect of [patient care](#) has been computerised, including all patient information, lab testing and radiological imaging. The most modern state-of-the-art equipment is used for diagnosis and treatment.

Due to the extraordinary help and cooperation received from the Kerala Government, the Centre and committed team of medical professionals and support staff, AIMS is comparable to the best hospitals in the world.

AIMS full range of primary and speciality care medical services enables cross-speciality consultation, which assures outstanding treatment for each patient. Extensive infrastructure offers extensive facilities comprising 25 modern operating theatres, 210 equipped intensive-care beds, a fully computerised and networked Hospital Information System (HIS), a fully digital radiology department, a 24/7 tele medicine service and a NABL accredited clinical laboratory. The Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences is the adjunct to the term "new universalism" coined by the World Health Organisation.

AIMS has a number of super speciality Departments including Department of Paediatric Cardiology, Department of [Cardiovascular](#) Surgery, Department of Paediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery [Cancer](#) Centre, Department of Medical [Oncology](#), Department of Surgical Oncology and Biochemistry.

The present areas of advanced clinical research at AIMS include: Molecular Biology, Molecular Medicine, Nano Medicine, Inborn Disorders of Metabolism, Bio-degradable Stent, Heart Muscle Disease, Tumour Immunology, Electrical Disorders of the Heart, Non Contact Mapping and RF Ablation Studies, Atrial Fibrillation -Genesis and Management, Vulnerable Plaque Recognition and Management, Studies on Tropical Pancreatitis & Hepatitis B. A sequencer and real-time PCR and thermal cyclers have been made available to enable provision of diagnostic genetics for common inherited diseases and also to aid in research. These instruments will also be used for microbiological and HLA-related research in addition to population genetics. Expression of relevant genes in tumours will be evaluated by real-time PCR. A homograft bank with a cryopreservation facility will also be provided for better management of cardiovascular diseases. AIMS will maintain cell lines which will enhance the research activities in cell biology, molecular cytogenetics, immunology, biochemistry, molecular biology, mycoplasma and virus diagnostics.

Particular emphasis will be placed on a programme of extensive quality and identity control and on characterisation of the cell lines. AIMS has been awarded research protocols from funding agencies such as the Department of Biotechnology (GOI), the Department of Science and Technology (GOI), the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the State Department of Science, Technology and Environment. AIMS is involved in multi centred international clinical studies.

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Doctoral-level research facilities are available in certain areas of basic medical sciences and epidemiology. Given the competitive nature of research, its library provides ready access to current high-impact journals in all areas of biology and medicine with network computers. This is valuable for scientists as well as medical students in training.

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