Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP)
27-29 November 2014
13th Asian Spinal Cord Network (ASCoN) international conference took place in Bangladesh from 27th to 29th November 2014 in BRAC CDM, Khagan, Savar, Dhaka. Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) hosted the Conference this year. This was a very successful conference for a number of factors which include greater participation and new events including a regional sports competition and assistive device competition.

The theme was 'Living Life to the Full'. The focus was on professional development of the health care personnel involved in SCI care and the development of rehabilitation services for people with SCI; strengthening spinal injury services and human resource development for organizations and people working in spinal injury management in the Asia region and sharing information, ideas and knowledge of best practices in spinal cord injury management among members.

The conference also provided the impetus to recent developments in SCI management in Bangladesh; inform policy directions in SCI management and to upgrade the knowledge and skills of those delivering SCI services. The conference has shared recent development of the rehabilitation for spinal cord injury patients through scientific paper presentations, poster presentations, workshops, sports, cultural program and fair. Overview of comprehensive Spinal cord injury (SCI) management, SCI epidemiology and system of care, community inclusion and follow-up, fertility and sexuality, sports, active rehabilitation and recreation, quality of life and employment of SCI people were the key issues addressed by the conference.

More than 350 participants from 20 different countries convened at 13th Asian Spinal Cord Network Conference, with this year’s attendees introduced to key areas, such as www.elearnSCI.org - an interactive resource tool; professional networks including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses and psychologists; concurrent workshops for all healthcare professionals and consumers. Attendees soaked up the latest opinions, trends, and insights from industry thought leaders, shared experiences with colleagues, made new contacts and strengthened existing relationships, and honed their ideas and knowledge. Total of 50 consumers with their carers from Bangladesh attended the conference.
The programme was a rich mix of formats, ranging from plenary sessions featuring many well-known and thought-provoking keynote speakers to intense, highly interactive discussion sessions.

**Opening Ceremony:** Opening ceremony was held on 27th Nov 2014. The Founder and Coordinator of CRP Valerie A. Taylor welcomed all on behalf of the Organizing Committee. The ASCoN Secretary Maggie Muldoon also spoke about ASCoN. The opening session was enriched by the speeches of the special guests Prof. Rashiduddin Ahmed, Professor of Emeritus – Dept of Neurosurgery, BSMMU; Prof. JJ Wyndaele, ISCoS President, Urologist, University of Antwerp, Belgium; and Prof. Dr. Deen Mohd. Noorul Huq, Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. The session was graced and officially opened by the Chief Guest Mohammed Nasim MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Finally the Executive Director of CRP Md Shafiq ul Islam conveyed the vote of thanks.

**Panel Discussions:**
Two panel sessions provided a framework and information on Pre-hospital Management of Trauma Patients to prevent SCI, Psychosocial Management - Its Role in the Overall Comprehensive Management of People with SCI, acute care in SCI, Sexuality and fertility in SCI, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy for Comprehensive management of SCI, medical and nursing care and complication management of SCI. Moreover, successes and remaining challenges in order to provide comprehensive SCI management in ASCoN member countries was also well addressed by the panel sessions. This part has also emphasized the value of Government initiative in terms of comprehensive management of SCI patients.

**Scientific Sessions:**
There were eight parallel scientific sessions in the conference and different renowned resource persons were key speakers and facilitated the sessions. These sessions were broadly focused on the six sub-themes of the conference as follows:

SCI epidemiology and systems of care: Keynote Speaker: Yorck - Bernhard Kalke; Urology: Keynote Speaker: Prof. Jean Jacques Wyndaele; Community inclusion and follow-up. Keynote Speaker: David Lowen; SCI Management and Outcomes. Keynote Speaker: Dr. H S Chhabra; Fertility and Sexuality. Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Fin Biering-Sorensen; Sports, Active Rehabilitation and Recreation. Keynote Speaker: Assoc Prof. Dr. Tomasz Tasiemski; Quality of Life and Employment. Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Marcel Post; Telemedicine. Keynote: Dr Victor Patterson; SCI Peer Support and Carer Education facilitated by David
Constantine; and Surgical and Medical Management facilitated by Prof. Emeritus Rashiduddin Ahmad.

Workshops:
11 workshops integrated the views on very specific issues related to SCI, stimulated participants’ thought and provided a platform for new ideas to emerge. The workshops were as follows:

- Understanding about assessment of a person injuries and disabilities which was emerged from the disaster of Rana Plaza;
- Physiotherapy management
- Sexuality and Fertility
- Occupational Therapy
- Nursing management
- Root cause analysis of complications of SCI

- SCI Consumer workshop
- Psycho-social management
- Role of pwd in inter-professional rehabilitation
- Care giver training
- IDAPP Project - ISCoS database
- ASCoN pilot project (IDAPP)

Awards:
- ASCoN Best Paper Award – ASCoN
- Observership Award

In the 13th ASCoN Conference there were total 32 international papers and 28 national papers submitted. Among those paper presenters there were 2 winners who shared this award:

1. Md Akhlasur Rahman, Clinical Physiotherapist – CIVIC Project, CRP from Bangladesh
2. Meena Makhija, Assistant Professor, Indian Spinal Injury Centre-IRS from India

The prize for both winners is a one-month observership at an ASCoN Training Centre. Meena has opted to undertake her observership in Malaysia at the University Malaya Medical Centre and Cheras Rehabilitation Hospital. Akhlasur is still deciding.

**ASCoN Best Poster Presentation Award**

In the conference there were 8 posters presented - 4 international and 4 national. The winner of the poster presentation was Mahmud Al Hasan from CRP, Bangladesh.

**ASCoN Best Assistive Device Design Award – USD $500**

There were total 5 Assistive Device Design submissions for the competition. Among them two prize were given. The winners of the competition were:

First prize:
Iffat Rahman Bristry, Physiotherapist, In Charge – Department of Special Seating & APT won the first prize jointly for “Tilt in Space Wheelchair”.

Another winner is a group consisting of six members. They were-
Fatema Tuj Johra Iris, Occupational Therapist–CRP, Assistant Professor of Institute of Information Technology of Jahangimagar University Dr M Shamim Kaiser & Shamim Al Mamun, Second Secretary (Taxes-
15) Mohammad Kamal Hossain, Lecturer of Institute of Information Technology of Jahangirnagar University Jamshad Iqbal Chowdhury and a student of EECE, MIST Sayed Nazmus Sakib. This group won the first prize jointly for “Low Cost Solar Power Wheelchair in Bangladesh”.

The third winner was Md Firoz Shalauddin & he won the third prize for “Bicycle Wheel Alignment Machine”.

Exhibitions:
There were also art exhibitions of persons with spinal cord injury. The spinal cord injured artist Ruma, Ibrahim & Al Amin were present in the exhibition. Lots of paintings and cards were sold to participants.

At the conference venue there were a number exhibition booths. Among them four were from local pharmaceutical companies - Beximco, Square, Incepta & ACME. Other booths include the AHEAD project, CRP’s income generation project and SCIDAB.

Sports Competitions:
Wheelchair Basketball Tournament – The 13th ASCoN conference was also extended to the playground through tri-nation wheelchair basketball tournament where people with spinal cord injury from Bangladesh, India and Nepal demonstrated eye catching performances. Their speed, marvellous techniques and ability to score attracted hundreds of spectators. ICRC sponsored the tournament. Championship games between Bangladesh, Nepal and India were played between 28/11/14 and 1/12/14. In the final match CRP’s team beat Nepal and won the championship. In the prize giving ceremony CRP’s founder and coordinator Dr Valerie Ann Taylor was present. Mr. Darko Jordanov, Deputy Head of Delegation, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Gerd Van de Velde, Physical
Rehabilitation Project Manager, ICRC, Md Mahfuzur Rahman, Assistant Project Manager, Physical Rehabilitation Project, ICRC, was also present in the prize giving ceremony. ASCoN Executive committee members from different ASCoN Countries were also present in the occasion.

**Table Tennis** – Total eight players were participated in the table tennis competition from Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The competition was held in the Reddway Hall – CRP. In this competition Keshav Thapa won the championship and Ram Bahadur won the runner up prize. Both of them were from Nepal.

**Power lifting** – Total eight players were participated in the power lifting competition from Bangladesh, India and Nepal. The competition was held in the Reddway Hall – CRP. In this competition Hafizul Islam from Bangladesh won the championship for 102 kg weight and Indrojeet Kor from Bangladesh won the runner up prize for 82 kg weight.

Moreover three foreign sports volunteers were received “Thank You Prize” for their hard work and contribution. They are - Oshima Masa Mitsu, Yuki Idate and Michael Ho.

**Cultural Program:**
There was a great cultural evening on the 2nd day of the conference held at the REDDWAY Hall – CRP. There was an Orchestra Music, a dance performance by Aniket Paul, Dance by SCI performers from CRP, Performance by Renowned Dance group - Anik Basu and moreover there was also a performance by each participated Country.
Conference, focusing on key facets of coverage that continue to be important as Knowledge and Experience Sharing.

The most popular English national “The Daily Star” published a full page article on the 28th November 2014 and a cover story in their weekly magazine on 5th December 2014 entitled Living Life to the Full

The Bangla National Daily Kalenkontho also published informative news about the conference on 28th November 2014.

Tri-nation (Bangladesh, India and Nepal) sports competition was held beside the conference where Bangladesh Team won the championship on Wheelchair Basketball event. Channel i, ATN News, GTV, Asian TV, RTV covered the news both of the Conference and the Sports events.

A friendship match of wheelchair basketball tournament was held in the Dhaka University Swimming Complex Ground between Bangladesh and Nepal on 3rd December 2014 and ATN News telecasted the game in their uncut news event on 4th December 2014.

Links
   url=http://atnnewstv.com/data/video/N00000002386.flv

To announce the 14th ASCoN Conference 2015, the ceremonial “Handing over the Baton” was passed to the ASCoN Executive Committee Member and Executive Director, Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC), Ms Esha Thapa from Nepal. The 14th ASCoN Conference will be hosted by Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC), Nepal from 4th – 6th December 2015.

Below are excerpts of feedback received from participants and organisers regarding the event:

Range of speakers and participants from different countries was good.

For the sports competition a standard age level should be given.

In the conference it is not good to separate the food arrangement for the non disabled persons & persons with disabilities.

People from different countries were brought together. The conference was successful to spread its message. In future has to try to develop the category of scientific papers and try to give more priority on the paper quality.
Content and quality of the resource persons were good. The program titled “It’s My Life” was a great and innovative idea. During this session a number of expatients of CRP took to the stage to tell the audience about their active and productive lives after sustaining spinal cord injury.

Many foreign delegates attend the conference with a group of participants and with their own publications which was a great resource for the conference.

Publication related advertisement of the conference should be circulated earlier. There were some communication gap in the resource person selection process and the arrival & departure confirmation of the foreign guests.

The overall process and arrangement of the conference were good.

The hospitality of CRP and everyone’s hard work were much appreciated. It was hugely successful thanks to everyone’s hard work over an extended period of time. The basketball game was a highlight. And the stories of past patients were inspiring and a tribute to the wonderful work of CRP.

The sports competitions for persons with disabilities have opened doors for the wheelchair athletes to other international events as well. The dedication of all the sports volunteers and staffs of CDD was commendable.

The links which have developed from different consumer organisation from different countries with the ASCON countries can grow and develop in the future.

IDAPP was the fantastic scientific initiation for the demography and etiology of the SCI in low resource regions. This would help to do large scale research project and prevention strategy in sub-continent.

Sports as a recreational, rehabilitation and competition was a good concept that had seen in ASCoN and hope it will be continue in coming ASCoN conference.

Common things should be come first like pressure sore, neurogenic bladder, psychosocial issues etc which was done in ASCoN and its also time to start uncommon consequences like SCI and pregnancy, aging and stem cell issues etc.

All of the plenary sessions and symposiums were conducted by respected and authorities in their areas and are named below:

**ASCoN Executive Committee:**
Valerie A. Taylor (Bangladesh)
Dr Apichana Kovindha (Thailand)
Dr Nazirah Hasnan (Malaysia)
Dr H S Chhabra (India)
Ms Esha Thapa (Nepal)
Dr M Narendra Pinto (Sri Lanka)
Mr Stephen Muldoon (Ireland)
Ms Maggie Muldoon (Ireland)
Dr Fazlul Hoque (Bangladesh)
Mr Shivjeet Raghaw (India)

**Resource Persons for Scientific sessions & Workshop:**
Prof Dr Charlotte Kiekens (Belgium)
Prof JJ Wyndale (Belgium)
Mr Frans Penninx (Netherlands)
Dr Victor Patterson (India)
Dr Chitra Kataria (India)
Devid Constentine (UK)
Djenana Jalovcic (Bangladesh)
Dr Raju Dhakal (Bangladesh)
Katharine Stewart (PRIMARK-Bangladesh)
Dr. Luis Garcia
Ms Lucy Robinson (UK)
Fin Biering Sorensen (Denmark)
Prof Marcel Post (Netherlands)
Dr Stanley Ducharme (USA)
Dr Yorck Kalke (Germany)
Fiona Stephenson (UK)
Assoc Prof Lisa Harvey (Australia)
Prof. Emeritus Rashiduddin Ahmad (Bangladesh)
Dr Md. Fazlul Hoque (Bangladesh)
Prof M A Salam (Bangladesh)
Dr Mostafa Kamal (Bangladesh)
Mr Peter Murray (Australia)
Ms Kierre Williams (Australia)
Tomasz Tasiemski (Poland)

Norayuni Binti Mohd Kasim

Team from Sri Lanka
Mrs Jayathilake K.W.A.S.R
Miss Rawladola Arachchilage
Dr. Potumulle Kankanamalage
Mrs Susila Premalatha
Dr Ajith Appuhamy
Ajith Kithsiri

Team from Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Center, Nepal:
Ms. Chanda Rana
Ms. Mandira Baniya

Others:
Dr. Pamil (India)
Mohit Arora (Australia)
Dr Gaurav (India)
Dr.Meruna Bose (India)
Dr Dhruv Mehta (India)
Dr Renee (Italy)
Samitha Samanmali (Sri Lanka)

Team from University Malaya Medical Center Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia:
Mohd Hafizi Bin Mohtar
Mohd Nor Fadly Bin Osman
Sahadah Binti Muhamad Amin
Atika Suhada Binti Mistee

Jon Moussally (US)
Meena Makhija (India)
Assoc. Prof. Md. Sohrab Hossain (Bangladesh)
Morshedul Quadir (Bangladesh)

Without the support given by our local and international sponsors, the 13th ASCoN 2014 would not have been successful. Sponsors supported by providing avenue for speakers to have access for contributing to the conference, providing conference material, food, accommodation, airfare of regional resource persons, exhibits of current and latest development in Rehabilitation Medicine and contributed funds in the form of advertisements in the programme book. The organisers acknowledged the support given by both local and international sponsors which contributed immensely to the success of the 13th ASCoN 2014, Bangladesh.

Below are the list of sponsors and Exhibitors and contributors to the success of 13th ASCoN 2014 –

Local:
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Beximco Pharmaceuticals
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Drag International National Bank
Trust Bank Biotech Services
Orion Pharma Tradesworth Ltd
CIVIC project – CRP ALPD project – CRP

International:
Spirit, UK

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International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS)
Livability, Ireland

The conference organizers also very grateful to other organizations who gave the spontaneous support for organizing the conference & accommodation of the resource persons and wheelchair sports players:

1. BRAC Center, Mohakhali, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2. BRAC-CDM, Khagan, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh
3. Center for the Disability Development (CDD), Ulail, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh
4. Village Education Resource Center (VERC), Anandapur, Savar, Dhaka Bangladesh
5. The YMCA training center, Savar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

SEE YOU IN NEPAL FOR THE 14TH ASCON CONFERENCE FROM 4TH – 6TH DECEMBER 2015