

SAMARTH ANNUAL REPORT

2010-2011

List Of Members

2010-2011

Governing Body Members

Dr. L. Jeyaseelan – President

Dr. Shuba Kumar – Secretary

Dr. Rani Mohanraj – Treasurer

Dr. Saradha Suresh

Dr. B.W.C. Sathiasekaran

Dr. R.Thara

Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar

Dr. Kumaraswami

Dr. Krishnakumar

Advisory Body

Dr. Lisa Manhart

Members

Dr. Keerthi Prabhu

Ms. Aarthi Kandasamy

Mrs.Visalakshi Jeyaseelan

Ms. K.V.Sripriya

Mr. Veerapandian

Ms. Sylvia Jeyakumar

Ms. C.D. Nandini

Mrs. Basilea Watson

Ms. Premalatha

Auditors : Arasu and Arunachalam
Chartered Accountants

Bankers : Canara Bank, St.Mary's Road, Chennai

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Samarth has been continuing its work on building capacity in social science research and has also been engaging in research activities that have the long term goal of enhancing patient care through improved and better means of health care delivery. The ongoing research project at Madras Medical College that seeks to identify a culturally appropriate and relevant depression screening instrument suitable for HIV-care settings is one such study that has the overall goal of incorporating comprehensive mental health care for HIV positive patients, thereby enhancing their quality of life. Similarly, another research project that we are currently engaged in is looking to understand the reasons for maternal anaemia and low birth weight in newborn babies. This information will hopefully provide added insights to help our governments and local health bodies plan and implement adequate measures to address this serious health concern. In the pipeline are other research work that seeks to address problems associated with domestic violence and issues concerning adapting culturally relevant mental health treatments for HIV+ people.

On the training front, our social science workshops continue to be popular. While our regular workshops at the Biostatistics Resource and Training Facility at CMC, Vellore continue, we are now seriously planning on expanding the scope and content of our training workshops. We have plans of running workshops that include both Basic Epidemiology and Social Science in Chennai as this will provide participants a more comprehensive understanding of research methodology.

ABOUT SAMARTH

We are a group of epidemiologists, social scientists, psychologists and biostatisticians who share a common vision in advocating for health research. We have extensive research experience in using both qualitative and quantitative methods in several national and international multicentric health projects. These have ranged from projects on domestic violence, adolescent mental health, community mental health to, care and support programmes for HIV positive persons.

Samarth was set up in January 2007 and registered as a society under the Tamilnadu Societies Registration Act, 1956 on 24th May 2007; Samarth has been involved in conducting various research projects and social science training programmes.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Conducting research to inform policy
- Promoting healthy behaviour through counselling and community education
- Building capacity in epidemiology, social science and biostatistics
- Building partnerships with government and private sectors in health promotion

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Samarth is committed to creating healthier lives of communities through credible research and sustainable interventions

SAMARTH RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

RRESEARCH

1) Integrating Depression Screening into HIV Care in Southern India

This R21 study is a collaboration between Samarth, the BRTC at CMC-Vellore and the University of Washington and proposes to understand how best to integrate a screening for depression into HIV care settings. The proposal was first approved by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) USA and later by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO). Specifically, the study aims to 1) Identify the most appropriate tool to screen HIV-positive individuals in South India for depression. 2) Determine inter-rater reliability between a psychiatrist and a psychologist in diagnosing depression among HIV patients using a structured diagnostic instrument. 3) Identify barriers and facilitators to integrating depression screening into existing HIV-care services and lastly, 4) Estimate the prevalence and correlates of depression among HIV-patients seeking care in an urban HIV clinic.

All institutional clearances (both from MMC and from CMC) were obtained, following which we began the initial process of undertaking cognitive interviews with a small sample of HIV positive patients. This began on March 9th 2011. The purpose of this was to evaluate the quality of the Tamil translated questionnaires and assess if patients understood them well. Following this, the instruments were revised based on the feedback that emerged from the cognitive interviews. All the revised Tamil translated questionnaires were then submitted to the CMC-IRB and later to the UW-IRB for approval. Once this is granted we will be in a position to commence the pilot study.

2) Maternal Nutrition in three states of India: Tamilnadu, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

This is a collaborative study between Emory University – USA, Samarth – Chennai, the Madras Diabetes Foundation (MDRF) - Chennai and the Public Health Foundation (PHFI) – New Delhi on Maternal Nutrition in three states of India: Tamilnadu, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The objective of the study is to review current maternal and child health policies and program implementation experiences in these three states to identify potential delivery platforms and inform implementation of future maternal health programs. The study commenced in October 2010 and data collection in Tamilnadu took place in four districts, namely, Thiruvannamalai, Madurai, Salem and Dindigul. These districts were selected based on an analysis of development indicators, health outcomes, health infrastructure, social development index, geography, cultural factors and feasibility given economic and temporal restrictions. A total of 16 focus group discussions (FGDs), four in each district, were carried out with both women and Anganwadi Workers during the months of October to December 2010. The FGDs sought to understand perceptions on food and dietary patterns,

maternal nutrition, ongoing nutritive intervention programmes, availability of resources and understand their awareness and understanding of the various activities carried out by health officials to prevent malaria and worm infestations in the community.

Each FGD was audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim and translated into English. The translated transcripts were then imported into NVIVO, a software for carrying out qualitative analysis. The data have been transcribed and the analysis and interpretation of data is ongoing.

3) Diabetes Community Lifestyle Improvement Program (D-CLIP),

The Madras Diabetes Research Foundation and the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University are working to prevent diabetes in Chennai. The D-CLIP study funded by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) through the BRiDGES grant, which is supported by an educational grant from Eli Lilly and Company, is a randomized trial testing a culturally specific, community-based lifestyle intervention for the prevention of type 2 diabetes in men and women living in Chennai, India. Study participants were randomized to receive either standard advice from a dietician or were enrolled into a series of lessons for improving their lifestyle and prevent diabetes. They had to attend classes once every week for six months, after which all study participants were followed up for at least a year to determine the effectiveness of the programme in bringing about weight loss and preventing/controlling diabetes. Focus group discussions were held with selected participants upon completion of the classes to understand their perceptions on the acceptability of the lifestyle programme. The FGDs are being conducted by Samarth. So far 4 such FGDs have been completed, two with men and two with women and these were held on 3rd and 10th July 2010 and then again on 4th and 11th December 2010.

4) Informed Consent in the Medical Setting

With a view to developing a consent process that would be relevant and meaningful to the Indian scenario, Samarth in collaboration with CMC carried out a small qualitative study in the surgery department at CMC hospital. The study involved doing in-depth interviews with doctors and patients following their surgery, to understand how they perceived the process of informed consent, constraints to obtaining informed consent and discover how best the process could be made more meaningful relevant to our cultural milieu. The study commenced in January 2010. A total of 13 patients and 8 doctors were interviewed. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim. These transcribed interviews were imported into NVIVO, a qualitative

analysis software programme which helped organize the data and aided in writing the report. A final report was submitted to CMC on 14th March 2011.

5) Pilot Study To Assess The Acceptability and Effectiveness Of Central Storage of Pesticides In Preventing Suicides : Community Controlled Trial

This is a collaborative project between Samarth, Sneha, the BRTC at CMC-Vellore, the VHS – Chennai and the WHO. The study aimed to i) assess the acceptability and costs of a central pesticide storage facility as a programmatic intervention to reduce pesticide related suicide and attempted suicide in selected villages in Tamilnadu state, ii) evaluate the quality of community cohesion and its association with attempted and completed suicides and, iii) set up a surveillance system to record and document all deaths and attempted suicides in the selected villages. This community controlled intervention project was a two year mixed methods study, funded by WHO and commenced in April 2009.

The specific villages selected for study were Kandamangalam and Kurungudi which were the intervention sites and Karunagaranallur and Pazhanjanallur which constituted the control sites all located in Cuddalore district. The focus groups discussions 4 in each district, (2 with men and 2 with women) were completed between August to September 2009 before the household survey commenced. The baseline household survey commenced in September 2009 and was completed in January 2010. The central storage facility was commissioned in February 2010. Two supervisors were appointed to man the facility and people were encouraged to store their pesticides in individual lockers that had been built in the facility. During this one year period when the intervention was underway any cases of attempted or completed suicide that occurred in any of the villages were documented. At the end of one year of the intervention another set of FGDs and a repeat household survey were carried out. The main aim of the FGDs and the endline survey were to determine people's perceptions on the storage facility and gauge its effectiveness in preventing/reducing suicides. A total of 8 FGDs, two each in district (1 with men and 1 with women) were completed in March 2011. An endline household survey was carried out in the same villages which commenced in April 2011 and is currently ongoing.

6) PREMIUM Project

The goal of PREMIUM, a Program for Effective Mental health Interventions in Under-resourced health systems, is to elaborate a psychological treatment development and evaluation methodology that will lead to new, culturally appropriate, feasible, acceptable, affordable and effective psychological treatments for mental disorders in under-resourced settings. A core element of this methodology is the ultimate scalability of the treatments by emphasizing its delivery by community or lay health workers (CLHW). This methodology will be elaborated in the context of two mental disorders affecting adults: Depressive Disorder (DD) and Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). The study funded by the Wellcome Trust, UK, is being carried out by Sangath with Dr. Vikram Patel and Dr. Neerja Choudhury as the Principal Investigators. Dr. Shuba Kumar and Dr. Rani Mohanraj are the qualitative consultants to this study and are responsible for guiding the team in the conduct of in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, namely, patients, family caregivers and health care providers. Initially, the field team were trained in qualitative research methods and analyses following which guides specific for the different stakeholder groups were developed. Subsequently both Dr. Shuba and Dr. Rani provided inputs on the quality of the interviews carried out by the field team through a review of the transcribed interviews. The analysis plan was then developed and carried out. The process of coding a few transcripts and reviewing the transcripts coded by other members of the field team is currently underway. The final report will need to be submitted in September 2011.

7) COPSI project

The COPSI study (Community Care for People with Schizophrenia) aims to evaluate which of two treatments is better for people with schizophrenia, in reducing their symptoms and in improving their social functioning: Facility Based Care (FBC) or Collaborative Community Based Care (CCBC). The former involves treating patients and their families in the clinic (i.e. the term 'facility') by psychiatrists and other qualified medical and paramedical personnel; the latter involves, in addition to this, a set of treatments given by a trained person called a Community Health Worker (CHW) who visits the patients and their families at home. In order to do this evaluation, COPSI seeks to give some patients and their families FBC and some others CCBC and then wishes to compare the results between the two groups after 12 months. COPSI is being carried out at three sites in India. These are: Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), Chennai; Sangath, Goa; and Parivarthan and Nirmitee (in collaboration with private psychiatrists),

Satara. In each of these sites, the two sets of treatments are being compared. The duration of the project is 3years and the study is funded by Wellcome Trust, UK. Dr. Shuba Kumar has been appointed as a qualitative consultant to this study and will be overseeing the qualitative phase of the study. The study commenced in October 2010. All baseline in-depth interviews with patients and their family caregivers has been completed and the report writing is underway. The endline in-depth interviews are now ongoing.

RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

The following projects are currently in the pipeline:

1) Developing a Research Agenda on Domestic Violence and HIV in Southern India

Tackling the complex problem of domestic violence and HIV requires a multidisciplinary approach, engaging established experts in related fields as well as new/early stage career investigators to build future capacity for ongoing work in this area. Therefore, we propose a series of meetings to develop an interdisciplinary team of senior and junior Indian and U.S. investigators. We will also incorporate a senior Kenyan investigator experienced in research on domestic violence and engagement in PMTCT programs, leveraging an opportunity for South-South collaboration. This team will investigate the current state of the science on domestic violence and HIV, identify research gaps, and develop a targeted research agenda. At the completion of this series of meetings, we expect to have a committed, functioning research team poised to carry out the research agenda developed during the process. This grant is being applied for under the R 13 mechanism as part of the Indo-US Programme for Maternal Child Health and Human Development Research (MCHDR) programme. The proposal has been submitted to ICMR/NACO and we are awaiting their comments.

2) Living Positively with HIV: Quantitative Evaluation of a Follow-Up Counselling Toolkit in Karnataka”

Another collaborative project with the University of Washington proposes to obtain preliminary data on the potential efficacy of a Follow-up Counselling toolkit so that, ultimately HIV positive persons in India can better utilize treatment and enjoy better health outcomes. This project was awarded to Deepa Rao from the Department of Global Health, University of Washington (UW)

under the New Investigator Award (NIA) from the UW/FHCRC Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) Developmental Core. Samarth is one of the collaborative partners. This proposal too is with ICMR/NACO and we are currently awaiting their clearance.

3) Domestic Violence and Suicide: An Intervention Study.

Collaborative project with Tata trust on Domestic Violence and Suicide: An Intervention Study. The specific aims of the study are 1) To develop sustainable intervention strategies aimed at reducing suicidal ideation and improving mental health of women in urban slums who are experiencing domestic violence 2) To implement, monitor and evaluate the applicability, cultural relevance, and acceptability of the intervention by the community. The proposal had been submitted to Tata Trust following which we received comments requesting us to expand the scope of the interventions. This process is underway.

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Publications

1. **Mohanraj R** and Karunanidhi S. (2010). Prevalence of depressive symptoms among urban adolescents of South India. *Journal of Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health* vol 6 (2); 33-43
2. Geng Zhang, Vasanti S. Malik, An Pan, **Shuba Kumar**, Michelle D Holmes, Donna Spiegelman, Xu Lin, Frank B Hu (2010) Substitution brown rice for white rice to lower diabetes risk: A focus group study in Chinese adults. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 110: 1216-1221

SOCIAL SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Social Science training Programmes organized by Samarth and those for which Samarth faculty had been invited to as resource persons are listed below:

1. Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis and Instrument Development- 17th – 22nd May 2010, BRTC, Vellore. Organized by Samarth
2. Qualitative Research Methods and Analysis and Instrument Development- 15th – 20th November, BRTC, Vellore. Organized by Samarth

Photograph 1

3. Training Workshop on Qualitative Research Methods Venue: Sangath, Goa – 4th – 5th February 2011.
4. One day workshop on Qualitative Research at Madras Christian College, Faculty of Social work- 19th March 2011.

Photograph 2

PROFILE OF **FOUNDER MEMBERS**

L. Jeyaseelan has a doctorate in Biostatistics and is currently the Professor and Head of the department of Biostatistics at Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. He was trained in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLLEN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network). He has established a Biostatistics Research and Training Centre (BRTC) and a Clinical Data Management Centre (CDMC) at CMC for high quality data analyses and management. In addition, to being the honorary president of Samarth he also provides his expertise as a Biostatistician for Samarth's research projects.

Shuba Kumar is a Social Scientist and holds a doctorate in Medical and Social Psychiatry. She received her training in Social Science and Epidemiology from the University of Newcastle, Australia under the INCLLEN (International Clinical Epidemiology Network) programme. She has been a lead investigator on research projects on women's reproductive health, domestic violence, mental health and HIV care and support programmes. She is also the sitting member of ethical committees in institutions such as Christian Medical College- Vellore, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Indian Institute of Technology and the Tuberculosis Research Foundation.

Rani Mohanraj completed her doctorate in Psychology from the University of Madras and was trained under the Fogarty Fellowship Programme in Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Washington, USA. She has been involved in research studies on mental health concerns, specifically depression in primary care and school mental health. She has also worked with HIV affected children and has consulted on the development of tools for counsellors in HIV care.

Saradha Suresh is the Director of the Institute of Child Health (ICH), Chennai. She underwent training in Clinical Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Health Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, USA under the INCLLEN programme. She has been the lead researcher on several neonatal and child health projects. She serves as a technical consultant on the research projects undertaken by Samarth.

Veerapandian was trained in Psychology from the President College, Chennai and completed M.Phil from University of Madras. He is a visiting faculty in Psychology at various educational institutions

PROFILE OF OTHER MEMBERS

Keerthi Prabhu has a doctorate in Psychology from the University of Madras. She is currently working as a clinical Psychologist at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai. She joined as a life member of Samarth in 2008. She participates as a faculty in workshops conducted on research methods for college students

C.D. Nandini has a post graduate degree in Nutrition and joined as a research assistant on the project on stigma and discrimination among HIV positive persons. She is well trained in qualitative research methods and her skills lies in conducting in-depth interviews.

Aarthi Kandasamy holds a post graduate degree in Psychology from the Women's Christian College, Chennai. She joined Samarth as a research assistant for a research project that aimed to study stigma and discrimination among HIV positive persons. Her exposure to research from this project strengthened her desire to pursue her career in research. She has gained experience in data collection methods and in qualitative research techniques

Premalatha has a post graduate degree in Sociology and is a life member of Samarth. Her expertise lies in data entry and data management and she does all the data entry for research projects of Samarth.

Sylvia Jeyakumar has a post graduate degree in Biostatistics from Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore. Her training and work experience at the Biostatics Resource and Training Centre (BRTC), CMC have honed her skills in statistical methods. She provides statistical consultations for research projects at Samarth.

K.V Sripriya has a post graduate degree in Nutrition and has worked as a research assistant in many research projects with founding members of Samarth. She is skilled in qualitative data collection methods and is involved in all research and training activities of Samarth. Her expertise lies in training and teaching and she has been involved in research studies on mental health concerns of adolescents and people living with HIV.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Audit Report of Samarth

We have examined the balance sheet of M/s **Samarth**, New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004 as at 31st March 2011 and the profit and loss account for the year ended on that date which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said trust or institution.

We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the head office and the branches of the above-named trust/institution by us so far as appears from our examination of the books, and proper returns adequate for the purposes of audit have been received from branches not visited by us, subject to the comments given below:

In our opinion and to the best of our information, and according to information given to us the said accounts give a true and fair view: -

- i. In the case of the balance sheet of the state of affairs of the above-named institution as at 31st March 2011 and
- ii In the case of the profit and loss account, of the profit or loss of its accounting year ending on 31st March 2011

The prescribed particulars are annexed hereto.

**For Arasu and Arunachalam
Chartered Accountants**

(B. Kandaswami Aravind)

Partner

Membership No. : 206691

**Place: - Chennai
Date: - 30/07/2011**

**O. No. 23A/ N. No. 105A, Sivan Kovil
Street, Kodambakkam, Chennai – 600 024**

Samarth			
New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004			
Balance Sheet as on 31.03.2011			
Liabilities	Amount Rs.	Assets	Amount Rs.
General Fund:		Current Assets:	
Balance B/D	132012.98	Telephone Deposit	1500.00
Add: Excess of Income Over Expenses	11.58		
Balance C/F	132024.56		
		Canara Bank FCRA	518801.00
Audit Fees Payable	5000.00	Canara Bank Savings A/c	864295.33
Project Funds	1253231.00	Cash in Hand	5659.23
Total	1390255.56	Total	1390255.56

For Arasu & Arunachalam

Chartered Accountants

B. Kandaswami Aravind

Partner

Place: Chennai

Date: 30/07/2011

Secretary

Shuba Kumar

Treasurer

Rani Mohanraj

Samarth			
New No.100, Warren Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004			
Income and Expenditure Accounts for the period ended 31.03.2011			
Income	Amount Rs.	Expenses	Amount Rs.
To Audit Fees Payable	5000.00	By Bank Interest	3512.00
To Bank Charges	83.00	By D- Clip Project	6180.00
To Electricity Charges	5233.00	By Depression Project	473230.00
To Food & Accommodation	98570.46	By Informed Concert Project	149024.50
To Participation Cost	27864.00	By MCH Project	381567.00
To Postage & Courier	5687.00	By Pesticides Project	6400.00
To Printing & Stationery	8601.00	By Social Science Project	437800.00
To Repair & Maintenance	16061.00		
To Salary	1092345.00		
To Social Science Workshop Expense	66963.20		
To Tea and Snacks	4300.56		
To Telephone Charges	23996.00		
To Travel Expenses	94106.70		
To Web Updating Charges	8891.00		
To Excess of Income Over Expenses	11.58		
Total	1457713.50	Total	1457713.50

For Arasu & Arunachalam

Chartered Accountants

B. Kandaswami Aravind

Partner

Place: Chennai

Date: 30/07/2011

Secretary

Shuba Kumar

Treasurer

Rani Mohanraj