

INTERNSHIP IN FLUOROSIS FOR TEACHING FACULTY OF MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, JANUARY 18–22, 2010, DELHI, INDIA

Fluorosis is a well-defined disease caused by fluoride poisoning or toxicity. It is prevalent in most parts of the world due to the consumption of fluoride through water and food containing fluoride, the long term treatment with fluoride-containing drugs, the use of dental products containing fluoride, and the exposure to industrial fluoride emissions.

Although fluorosis is increasing in prevalence in the developed world, patients seldom get appropriate diagnostic attention from hospitals because of a lack of awareness of the manifestations of the disease. The symptoms of fluorosis mimic those of many other conditions and have baffled many medical and dental professionals in both developed and developing nations. If the condition is not recognized, inappropriate treatment may result in adverse outcomes.

Fluorosis affects teeth, bone, and soft tissues. When dental fluorosis affects the teeth of children it causes a distinct, overtly visible discolouration with well delineated characteristics. It may mimic amelogenesis imperfecta and even dirty teeth. Therefore an adequate knowledge of the disease is necessary to arrive at the correct diagnosis. Dental surgeons need to be able to differentiate dental fluorosis from other dental disorders. Orthopedic surgeons need to be able to differentiate joint pain due to skeletal fluorosis from other bone disorders. Diabetologists need to be able to differentiate the polyuria and polydipsia accompanying fluorosis from diabetes mellitus. Pediatricians need to be able to differentiate children suffering from rickets due to calcium and vitamin D deficiency from bow-leg/knock-knee due to fluorosis and IDD (Iodine deficiency disorders) before prescribing medicines. Obstetricians and gynecologists need to be able counsel pregnant women who have fluorosis with low hemoglobin and anemia despite consuming a diet with an adequate iron intake. Couples where male infertility is the result of fluorosis need appropriate counseling before considering *in vitro* fertilization.

In response to this situation, at the request of several eminent medical and dental professionals from the developed world, I have made arrangements for an internship programme in fluorosis. I invite applications from the faculty of medical and dental schools and colleges in the developed world for attending a 5-day internship programme, January 18–22, 2010, at the Fluorosis Foundation of India, Delhi, India.

During the later part of 2010 a separate programme for those from developing countries will be held because their drinking water is often naturally contaminated with fluoride and the health problems of fluorosis are viewed differently to the way they are seen in developed countries where other sources of fluoride are commonly present. The curricula of both programmes will comprise lectures, demonstrations, the conducting of diagnostic tests, and the management of patients with fluorosis.

The application form, fee structure, and other details for the first internship, January 18–22, 2010, may be obtained from the Fluorosis Foundation of India's website: www.fluorideandfluorosis.com. During January, in North India, it is winter and weather will be cold with the temperature ranging from 10 to 15°C. The closing date for applications is October 30, 2009. The class size is limited and early application is advised.

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