

1st International Conference on Yoga and Naturopathy (ICYN) Bangalore, India, 9-13 Feb 2012

Eta Brand, ANPA President

I was honoured to be invited to represent our association and naturopathy from Australia at the ICYN 2012 conference from February 9 – 13th 2012. The ICYN was sponsored by the state of Karnataka's Department of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy).

The theme for the conference was '*Yoga and Naturopathy for Holistic Health*'. The conference ran 5 parallel tracks over 3 days. There were plenary sessions in the mornings followed by Education, Research and two Advocacy tracks; one in Hindi and one in Kannada (the official language of Karnataka state in India) as well as posters on display. The AROGYA expo next to the conference halls highlighted many products and services. The focus of the conference was to create a global platform for intellectual exchange to strengthen the evidence based practice of Yoga and Naturopathy. My presentation was titled: Naturopathy in Australia: Education and Current Issues. There was great interest with many questions after the presentation about naturopathy downunder.

Each day overseas delegates were invited to enjoy delicious traditional vegetarian food for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the VIP marquee. This was a great meeting place for networking and sharing of ideas.

In India naturopathy is practiced as a drugless therapy, no herbal or nutritional medicine or homeopathy. Yoga is also a drugless therapy and so these two disciplines are taught together as a Bachelor of Yoga and Naturopathy Science degree (BYNS). The bachelors program is five and a half years including a final clinical year. This degree status is equivalent to that of a conventional medical practitioner in India. There are 12 universities across India that offer the BYNS degree.

The conference was attended by 5000 delegates representing more than 32 countries with 200 speakers, chairpersons, panellists and judges. At the opening ceremony I was called to the stage to receive a commemorative plaque shown in the photo at right.



ICYN 2012 Main Entrance



ICYN 2012 Education Track Presentation



ICYN Feb 2012 Opening Ceremony



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After the three day conference, (which felt almost like an Indian wedding with food and festivities for many days), international and local delegates gathered for a one day meeting to establish an International Working Party with ongoing sub-committees to look at the education, clinical practice, research and advocacy of Yoga and Naturopathy around the world. There were approximately fifty people who attended this gathering. There were delegates from Harvard Medical School, the Samueli Institute, the US Department of Defense (CAM is offered to soldiers), the AANP (American Association of Naturopathic Physicians), University of Queensland, and many more.

Being on the S-VYASA yoga university campus, Dr Nagendra the Vice-Chancellor began the session with beautiful chanting. The good intentions and special spirit in the room that day was an experience hard to put into words. There was heartfelt sharing and willingness to collaborate so that together we can aim to raise standing of naturopathy and yoga around the world. Considering that Naturopathy is intrinsic to the Indian health care system, and 10% of the budget in the state of Karnataka is dedicated to AYUSH, we can admire the forward thinking of Indian government officials, policy makers and health administrators. Planning is also in the works to offer Naturopathy in all outpatient services in municipal hospitals.



L to R: Leigh Blashki AAYT, Eta Brand ANPA, Jon Wardle UQ



S-VYASA Campus Sacred Creatures



Barriers and challenges that exist in different countries were noted. Each subcommittee will start to organise information and documentation so that a template or gold standard is put forward to strive for levels of excellence in the field.

*Left: ICYN 2012 Working Party S-VYASA University
Seated behind the laptop Dr Nagendra, Vice-Chancellor of S-VYASA University*

Standing Dr Naveen, General Secretary-Scientific Program, ICYN-2012



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India has recognised the AYUSH systems are a gift to the world and have a major contribution to make preventing and reversing many modern lifestyle diseases. Non-communicable disease is an epidemic in India. This includes diabetes and cardiovascular disease that are the leading cause of death in India today. Research trials are underway to assess the viability of using these five health systems to provide efficacious and cost effective solutions. Naturopaths in India focus on offering 'Nature Cure' using foods, fresh herbs, hydrotherapy, massage, diet therapy, therapeutic fasting (not water), yoga therapy and acupuncture.



Above and Below: Jindal Naturecure Institute, Bangalore

I visited Jindal Naturecure Institute in Bangalore. It has 275 beds and is situated on 100 acres. It was established in 1978 as a charitable trust. Patients stay for two to four weeks, sometimes longer. They will be assessed by the naturopathic doctor when they arrive and in addition will also participate in relaxation and meditation techniques for their specific condition. At Jindal most of their food is grown organically on their property. I enjoyed some of the signage in the beautiful grounds.



I dared to vision what it would be like to have signage like "Nature cure is safe and provides long term relief" in the grounds of our local hospitals here in Australia! I toured the facilities with one of the naturopathic doctors who is responsible for data collection from patients that attend the institute. They plan to publish findings and add to the research evidence that supports naturopathy as a viable option for many health conditions. There is a conventionally trained doctor on staff in case of any emergencies. All the therapies and treatments otherwise are managed by the Naturopathic doctors.
www.jindalnaturecure.org

There are many in-house facilities where you can access nature cure treatments across India. The National Institute of Naturopathy in Pune, India is famous because Mahatma Gandhi used to attend this institute and in fact called it 'his home'. www.punenin.org Mahatma which means great soul, played an important role in reviving naturopathy in India and to his tribute is referred to as 'the father of Naturopathy'. Gandhi's birth date is October 2nd and in India they are now planning to celebrate this day as Yoga and Naturopathy Day.

After attending the conference and meeting many naturopaths from India and around the world, there is great passion to spread the word of naturopathy to the corners of the globe. I expect that relationships made at this conference and in my travels around Bangalore will stand the ANPA and the naturopathy profession in very good stead when it comes to international support, collaborations, sharing of knowledge and exchanges. I was privileged and honoured to participate at such a groundbreaking event. I know the way I think about naturopathy and yoga will never be the same. *Om Shanti.*

