

The Endocrine Society of India – Past, Present, and Future

The Endocrine Society of India (ESI) was born in Mangalore (Karnataka) on January 10, 1971 and registered in Chandigarh. In its infancy, ESI had very few members, but the numbers have increased to over 2000 members, with the majority being clinical endocrinologists and a few PhD endocrinology scholars. The first annual meeting of ESI was piggybacked with the Association of Physicians of India Conferences (APICON). Later, the annual conferences of ESI became independent as Endocrine Society of India Conferences (ESICON) and now span over 4–5 days with other national and international conferences like the Indian Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ISBMR, till 2009) and SAFES also joining ESICON.

The ESI has three major objectives: academic, research, and welfare of its members and the community. Due to hard work and dedication of our members, ESI has become a vibrant and progressive society achieving many noteworthy milestones. At present, ESI provides equal opportunities for each of its members starting from an “annual research methodology workshop” for the first-year DM/DNB residents, the “ENSPIRE program” for second-year DM/DNB residents, a “TYSA quiz” for the third-year DM/DNB residents, and “AV Gandhi awards” for the final-year DM residents. The Yuvocrinology provides a platform for young and budding endocrinologists to showcase their research. In addition, ESI also provides ad-hoc research grants of approximately 100 lakhs every year for young endocrinologists.

The executive members of ESI spearhead ESI Facebook live and NDTV show for the general public, SCOPE program, and VOICE of endocrinology for its members as well as for the medical fraternity of India to increase the awareness of various endocrine disorders. In addition to these initiatives, ESI recently initiated a multi-center research grant in a focused area of endocrinology. Last year, ESI also launched the ESI fellowships (FESI) to honor the contributions of its senior national and international members.

In 2023, ESI came up with a few more initiatives to have more active participation of all its members from the junior most to the senior most. The ESI executive committee conducted a nationwide endocrine quiz for MD residents to encourage the best young brains in the country to take up endocrinology as super-speciality. Basic research in particular is an integral component of endocrinology but hitherto did not receive due attention previously in the ESI activities. ESI also started the best PhD thesis awards to encourage basic research in endocrinology and the best DM thesis awards, given yearly as the AV Gandhi Excellence award in clinical endocrinology.

In our field, a few disorders are relatively uncommon and others are rare, but there is no national registry for these disorders. ESI initiated (year 2023) online registries for Klinefelter and Turner syndromes, hereditary and tumor-induced hypophosphatemic rickets osteomalacia, and hypophosphatasia. All these online registries are now fully functional. I urge all members to actively contribute so that we can generate a large database of these uncommon and rare endocrine and metabolic disorders. The rare disease registries will generate substantial publications as we along with ISBMR have done with the PHPT registry. In addition, the registry will eventually attract clinical trials in our country for rare disorders like hypophosphatasia (Asfotase alpha) and hypophosphatemic osteomalacia (burosumab). It will also help to increase the prospect of the availability of novel drugs that are not yet available in the Indian market for patient care.

In 2023, ESI also initiated “Young Investigator Research/Travel Awards” for two early career endocrinologists to acquire new skills and learn technology, which can be implemented in our country. In addition to ongoing ESI fellowships, we initiated a one-lifetime achievement award to honor a senior ESI member for his/her contributions to the broad field of endocrinology. ESI inducted two international advisors to guide and help ESI in various ongoing research activities of the society. Indeed, the international advisors can facilitate communication with other international scientific bodies with ESI; in other words, they will be the ESI brand ambassadors representing India in the global arena. From a patient care perspective, ESI initiated another mega activity: generating India-specific reference ranges for various analytes. This is the need of the hour as we are diagnosing and treating our population based mostly on Western (Caucasian) reference ranges. In the Chandigarh Urban Bone Epidemiological Study (CUBES), we observed that using Western BMD reference ranges was over diagnosing osteoporosis to the tune of 30%. So, it is high time to establish Indian-specific reference ranges for various important endocrine analytes, and the ESI should play a lead role at the national and international levels.

Getting an ESI membership was tough and was associated with a long latent period. It is now streamlined. An eligible candidate with a proper online application gets his/her membership in a few days or instantaneously.

In the past 3 decades, the field of endocrinology and diabetes has made significant progress. We deal with or contribute a major part of non-communicable diseases. The endocrinology subject is the subject of choice for most MD students, underscored by NEET results wherein 25 of the top 100 rankers chose endocrinology and DM as the subject of choice, probably due to the best work–life balance.

A lot of work has been done by our predecessors, but even more is required to be done. We can do a few more activities on priority to get orphan drugs like Asfotase Alpha, Burosumab, mitotane, and many more. Our journal (IJEM) is 30 years old, but it needs to have more impact in the scientific community by inviting not only cutting edge research from our country but also global research. Moreover, IJEM can be monthly instead of bimonthly. ESI has ensured that the IJEM case report has gained popularity and the issues are published on time.

There is a popular demand by our young members to modify the name of the DM degree from Endocrinology to Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, which can, in a wholesome fashion, communicate the skills of an endocrinologist. ESI is in communication with the National Medical Council and has made significant progress in this regard. Our society is pro-active in research and academics, but our presence in the community can be further enhanced with the organization of more events by our members to increase endocrine and DM awareness in the community. To start with, state chapters can take a lead in such community activities by generating reading material and audio-video aids, and funds available can be utilized to broadcast programs on regional television channels. Also, this year, ESI through its outreach program has conducted “ESI satellite CME programs” to engage ESI members in far-flung areas. Enthusiastic members can combine their physical activity with an awareness program under the ESI banner. Good interaction and collaboration among various national and international scientific societies (endocrine and non-endocrine) is another area that should be explored.

Finally, the Endocrine Society of India is safe, secure, and vibrant in the hands of visionary leadership. We will achieve our goals and aspirations to be one of the best scientific organizations in the world in terms of academics, research, the welfare of ESI members, the community, and the country.

Dear all ESI members, thank you for allowing me to serve you this past year as your President. I will continue to serve the endocrinology community in the years to come. Also, I want to extend gratitude by thanking all members of EC. I would also like to thank my wife, Rakhi, and my children, Tushar and Avika, for their unwavering support during this tenure.

Sanjay Kumar Bhadada

President, Endocrine Society of India.

E-mail: bhadadask@rediffmail.com

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