

Indian Epilepsy Association (Founded in 1971) **Programs conducted by the Bombay Chapter:**

Support Group Meetings (Started in 1991):

Conducted every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month.

Format of each meeting:

5 mins of Exercise: 5 of Paramahansa Yogananda's superconscious exercises.

Introduction: If new members are present

Sharing: By turn each member narrates his/her experiences of the previous 2 weeks, news read on the papers (to inculcate the reading habit) etc. Depending on time available the moderator chooses a topic, gives brief details and then everyone shares on the same e.g. 'The type of epilepsy I have', 'Times when I felt rejected' or 'Improving one's memory', etc.

Game & Snacks: Meeting ends with a game (usually a game of skill is selected where each person gets a minute to prove himself) and snacks. Birthdays of the month are celebrated on the 4th Saturday.

No. of participants: 10 – 25

Publicity: Mentioned in all publicity material e.g. brochure, pocket cards; word of mouth and doctor referrals. People are contacted over the phone only when a speaker is especially invited for the meeting, in which case up to 60 people could come for the meeting.

Cost: Approx. 6 euros / Rs.400 each meeting borne by the Association. No fee charged for participation

Our support group members are also trained to perform skits on epilepsy and environmental issues. These they perform at national conferences and public awareness programs.

Public Awareness Programs

At Schools: Target audience: children of standards 8 & 9
Depending on time available and facilities provided we have talk with a PowerPoint presentation, show a 10 min film, have a quiz. We have also had an *essay competition* on the topic 'My Friend has epilepsy'. Response was great. The essay was written at home, help could be taken from home members / relatives as we thought the more people involved in the task the greater the awareness.

Public Places: In the form of skits and distribution of leaflets / calendar cards.

At Hospitals: Neurologists from hospitals are contacted for permission and their involvement in hosting an awareness program at their hospital for their patients and caregivers. At these events we also enumerate the services being provided by our Association. If the hospital is hosting an epilepsy awareness program on their own, we request permission to let us talk about the activities at our epilepsy center

At our Epi.Center: Phone-In Program - neurologists / ketogenic diet specialist / psychiatrist were called to the epilepsy center at various times during the day and people were asked to phone in for advice. Publicity was done via hoardings and newspapers.

Training / education for people with epilepsy, caregivers and paramedicals

Comprehensive Epilepsy Care: 20 hour course held for paramedicals, over 4 days covers all important aspects related to epilepsy.

Epilepsy Educator's Workshop – a weekend course for people with epilepsy, caregivers and paramedicals.

Medicine Subsidy

Anti-epileptic drugs are sourced direct from the distributor, through the Pharma Company. Additionally our Association subsidizes the AEDs further for our life members.

Rural Medical Camps

Started on 18th November 2007. Since then we have had camps every 6-8 weeks. Funding received from private donors. Currently around 45-50 persons attend each Camp. Comprehensive care team consisting of a neurologist, physician, psychologist, special educator and few volunteers conduct the camp.

Fundraising

A musical concert is held every 1-2 years. In 2008 we had the original musicians from Bollywood films play tracks from the old numbers to the modern ones.

Legislative Issues

Working on getting 'Intractable / Disabling Epilepsy' included in the list of disabilities. *If other countries have a method of evaluating disability in epilepsy we would appreciate if you could send us the same.*

Other Activities conducted at/by our Center

- Counselling (group, individual, family)
- Special Education
- Yoga
- Information & referrals
- Parties / competitions to celebrate different festivals
- Picnic once a year
- Exhibition cum sales to sell products made by our members and caregivers

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