

The Lighthouse

Rotary
Club of Madras



WEEKLY PUBLISHED BY ROTARY CLUB OF MADRAS

ISSUE 12
SEPTEMBER 21
2025



SERVICE ABOVE SELF

BIRTHDAYS



Rtn Maya Thiagarajan	16 th September
Rtn Vivek A Parachur	17 th September
Rtn Ashok Thakkar R	18 th September
Rtn Dr Chandrasekhar R	18 th September
Rtn Ravi Prakash Singhee	19 th September
Rtn Shri Shakthi Girish	21 st September
Rtn Shivkumar Eashwaran	21 st September
Divya Chetti, Spouse of Rtn Deepak Chander	16 th September
Vidya Venugopalan, Spouse of Rtn Bikram Shivkumar	17 th September
Meghana, Spouse of Rtn Kishor Dandekar J	20 th September
K.T. Pillai, Spouse of Rtn Manasa T Pillai	21 st September
Shreya Sujeer, Spouse of Dr Gururaj Rao	21 st September



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Bulletin Design:

YATRTECHS

NO MEETING ON TUESDAY

23.09.2025

Send in your articles, news and stories for consideration in the Lighthouse bulletin to: lighthouse@rotarymadras.in
Stay updated with our very own RCM magazine!

Rotary Club of Madras (RCM)

Minutes of the 13th Weekly Meeting, held on Tuesday, 16 September 2025

1.30 pm, Hyatt Regency, Teynampet, Chennai

CALL TO ORDER

With the clock striking 1:30 PM, the meeting was gracefully called to order by President-Elect Rtn Balakrishna S, ably standing in for President Rtn Nikhil Raj, who is currently flying

the Rotary flag on an International Fellowship in Germany. The gathering came alive with the Rotary Song, a reminder of our enduring commitment to fellowship and service.

CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the 12th Weekly Meeting was confirmed.

WARM WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Club extended a warm embrace to visiting Rotarians, spouses, Probus members, and distinguished guests.

Special mention was made of Rtn Prem Abraham from the Rotary Club of Walnut Creek, California, introduced by PP Rtn NK Gopinath. His deep and meaningful contributions to RCM were recalled:

- A US \$5,000 Global Grant for life-saving surgeries of Ugandan children.
- A personal donation of US \$1,000 to Boys Town during an earlier visit.

The spirit of Rotary friendship was further cemented with a flag exchange ceremony.

VOCATIONAL SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

- A Cancer Screening Camp for Women was announced to be held at Selayur on 17 Sept 25.
- Members were cheerfully reminded to collect their Rotary-branded bags from the registration desk.

– RTN SHARON KRISHNA RAU

SECRETARY'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Members' birthdays and anniversaries were joyfully announced.
- Exciting news: the Diwali District Event was set for 5 Oct 25 at Gopinath Gardens, ECR. A vibrant promotional video was screened, inviting enthusiastic registrations.
- Note: No weekly meeting on 23 Sept 25. The Club meets again on 30 Sept 25.

– RTN PRASANNA RAJAGOPALAN

GUEST SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

- Rtn Roshan Cyrus Poncha introduced the afternoon's distinguished speaker, Dr. Nozer Sheriar — eminent gynecologist, women's health advocate, and acclaimed author.

CHIEF GUEST ADDRESS

- Dr. Sheriar captivated the audience with an illuminating talk on "Perimenopause and Andropause". With clarity and compassion, he highlighted the physical and emotional journeys of these stages of life. A lively Q&A session followed, busting medical myths and demystifying concerns around Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

VOTE OF THANKS

- Dr Rama Narasimhan delivered an eloquent Vote of Thanks, applauding Dr. Sheriar's insights and the value he brought to the gathering

HONOURING THE SPEAKER

- As a cherished gesture, Dr. Nozer Sheriar was presented with a copy of "Timeless Legacy" by the President.

ADJOURNMENT

- With all agenda gracefully concluded, the meeting was formally adjourned, leaving members enriched and inspired.

NAVIGATING MIDLIFE: A JOURNEY THROUGH PERIMENOPAUSE, MENOPAUSE, AND ANDROPAUSE

"Behind every healthy life is a great doctor – one who brings calm in crisis, knowledge with compassion, and presence when it matters most."



Few embody this ideal as profoundly as Dr. Nozer Sheriar, a renowned obstetrician and gynecologist from Mumbai. Dr. Sheriar has devoted his life to advancing women's health rights and ensuring access to safe abortion services. With over four decades of experience, 40+ published papers, 70 book chapters, and the widely celebrated book *Finding Your Balance: Your 360-Degree Guide to Perimenopause and Beyond*, he is a pioneer

in bridging science, empathy, and advocacy.

In a recent, spellbinding session, Dr. Sheriar explored the physical, emotional, and societal dimensions of midlife transitions. With humor, deep scientific insight, and moving personal stories, he shed light on both perimenopause, a transformative phase in women's lives, and andropause, the lesser-known male counterpart.

THE UNIVERSAL MIDLIFE TRANSITION

Midlife is often described as a crossroad – a time to reflect on what has been achieved and to prepare for the changes ahead. For women, it comes in the form of perimenopause and menopause. For men, it appears more subtly through andropause, also called late-onset hypogonadism.

Though the biological processes differ, the core challenge is universal:

To understand, adapt, and thrive during life's middle stage. Dr. Sheriar highlighted a startling demographic reality:

For the first time in human history, grandparents outnumber grandchildren.

This global aging population underscores the urgency of addressing midlife health proactively.



PERIMENOPAUSE: THE SUNSET BEFORE TWILIGHT

Menopause is widely understood as the end of a woman's reproductive years, marked by 12 consecutive months without menstruation. However, perimenopause – the transition period leading up to menopause – often remains misunderstood.

Dr. Sheriar used a poetic analogy:

"Imagine human life as a 24-hour day. Menopause is sunset. The glowing colors before sunset represent perimenopause, while twilight represents post-menopause."

During this phase, which typically begins in a woman's 40s, estrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate erratically. These hormonal swings can trigger a cascade of symptoms:

- **Hot flushes and night sweats**
- **Irregular menstrual cycles**
- **Mood swings and irritability**
- **Sleep disturbances**
- **Vaginal dryness and painful**

intercourse

- **Kay's Story: Overcoming the Storm**
- Kay, an energetic and health-conscious woman, found her life disrupted by sudden, uncontrollable hot flushes. These episodes struck at work, leaving her embarrassed and anxious.

Through careful evaluation, Dr. Sheriar prescribed menopause hormone therapy, which provided near-instant relief.

"Nothing could be further from the truth than the belief that all hormones are dangerous," Dr. Sheriar explained.

When administered correctly, hormones are among the safest and most effective treatments, restoring quality of life and confidence.

Kay's journey highlights the importance of early intervention and compassionate care, proving that midlife transitions can be navigated with grace and resilience.

THE EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE: SILENT TURMOIL

Hormonal changes impact not only the body but also mental health. Depression, anxiety, and anger often intensify during perimenopause, yet these symptoms are frequently dismissed.

Dr. Sheriar shared the case of Elle, who experienced severe PMS-like symptoms, mood swings, and anxiety. While she declined hormone therapy, alternative treatments –

including Evening Primrose Oil, diet modifications, and local vaginal estrogens – dramatically improved her well-being.

"This country has neglected mental health for too long," Dr. Sheriar emphasized.

Recognizing and addressing emotional symptoms is as crucial as treating physical ones, forming the foundation of holistic healthcare.



SENSUALITY AND INTIMACY: REDEFINING MIDLIFE

Sexuality in midlife is often cloaked in stigma, particularly for women. However, studies show that sexual activity supports physical and emotional health, especially vaginal well-being.

Dr. Sheriar recounted the story of Dee, who faced early menopause at 40. Alongside painful intercourse, she struggled with declining libido and fear of premature aging.

Through hormone therapy and low-dose androgens, Dee regained her vitality and confidence.

"We do not have to earn erotic care," Dr. Sheriar affirmed.

"We always deserved it."

By embracing open dialogue and innovative treatments, individuals can reclaim sensuality as a vital part of midlife wellness.

ANDROPAUSE: MEN'S HIDDEN MIDLIFE CRISIS



While menopause is widely discussed, andropause remains underrecognized. Beginning around age 30, men experience a gradual 1% annual decline in testosterone levels. By their 40s and 50s, symptoms may surface:

- Decreased muscle mass and strength
- Lower libido and erectile dysfunction
- Mood swings and depression
- Weight gain and fatigue
- Sleep disturbances

R's Story: Reclaiming Strength

R, a high-performing executive, began noticing subtle yet troubling changes – reduced strength, fatigue, and a declining sex drive. Initially attributing these to stress and aging, he eventually discovered that he was experiencing late-onset hypogonadism.

Testosterone replacement therapy and lifestyle changes restored his energy and self-esteem, proving that men, too, deserve targeted midlife care.

Dr. Sheriar predicted that andropause will soon receive the same attention as menopause, bringing balance to midlife health discussions.



SHARED RISKS: BONE AND HEART HEALTH

Both genders face heightened risks during midlife:

Osteoporosis:

- Women experience rapid bone loss after menopause due to declining estrogen.
- Men also lose bone density but at a slower rate.
- Prevention includes weight-bearing exercises, calcium and vitamin D, and fall-proofing homes to avoid fractures.

Cardiovascular Disease:

- Women lose natural heart protection after menopause, increasing their vulnerability.
- Men are traditionally more closely monitored, leading to diagnostic biases that must be addressed.

"Don't wait for a fracture or heart attack to take action. Prevention starts in midlife," Dr. Sheriar urged.

THE WOMEN'S HEALTH GAP: A CALL TO ACTION

Dr. Sheriar's presentation ended with startling statistics on gender disparities in healthcare:

- Women are 7× more likely to be misdiagnosed during a heart attack.
- They suffer 70% of chronic pain, yet 80% of pain research is conducted on men.
- Only 4% of healthcare venture capital is invested in women's health initiatives.

These inequities cause 75 million life-years lost annually, representing a \$1 trillion economic opportunity by 2040 if addressed.

Rotary clubs, governments, and communities must champion awareness, education, and equitable care, closing the women's health gap for future generations.



EMPOWERMENT THROUGH KNOWLEDGE

The heart of Dr. Sheriar's message was empowerment:

"We live in a network of stories. There isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling."

By questioning outdated beliefs, seeking accurate information, and embracing holistic care, individuals can navigate midlife transitions with strength and dignity.

His book, *Finding Your Balance*, serves as both a guide and a testament to the beauty of this stage of life. As actress Sandra Oh wisely said:

"Your forties are great – things start making sense. You start truly understanding power. Honestly, I can't wait for fifty."

CONCLUSION: A NEW CHAPTER, NOT THE END

Dr. Sheriar's talk redefined midlife as a time of transformation, not decline. With proper care, awareness, and compassion, menopause and andropause can be embraced as opportunities to thrive.

"The afternoon of life," Carl Jung once wrote, "is just as full of meaning as the morning – only its meaning and purpose are different."

As we step into this chapter, let us do so with courage, knowledge, and unwavering hope for a healthier, more equitable future.

DOSAS, DRAMA, AND DYNAMIC FELLOWSHIP

An evening straight out of a fairytale unfolded at the warm and welcoming home of Mansi and Prashanth, where nearly twenty Rotarians gathered for a night brimming with laughter, bonding, and delectable delights. Their home was a living gallery. Madhubani paintings danced on the walls, ancestral statues stood proud, and even the very steps whispered fragrant welcomes.

Mansi, the queen of hospitality, personally fed starters to each guest, ensuring that no plate and no heart was left empty. From quirky "fun facts" that revealed hilarious secrets to a circulating gift game honoring service, joy bubbled in every corner. The feast was legendary: tangy dahi papdi chaat, indulgent biryani, and addictive paan shots (Aswath even smuggled a few home!).

By the night's end, bellies were full, spirits soared, and bonds deepened. It wasn't just an evening; it was a masterclass in fellowship, leaving all richer in laughter and love.

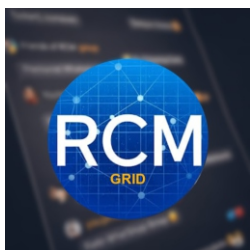


-Sahaja, Spouse of Rtn Aswath Reddy

A MORNING OF LEADERSHIP AND INSPIRATION AT MCTM

On 15 September 25, the vibrant halls of M.C.T.M Chidambaram Chettyar International School buzzed with excitement as Interactor Shivansh was installed as President. The ceremony, held in the school auditorium, was graced by Rtn S. Balakrishna, President-Elect of the Rotary Club of Madras, whose inspiring address ignited a spark of motivation among the young leaders.

It was a momentous occasion, in which Guests of Honor, Hon Sec Rtn Prasanna Rajagopalan, Youth Service Director, Rtn Suman Voora and Zone Chairman, Rtn Mehul Nanavati encouraged the youth to create waves of meaningful change. District Rotaract Chairman, Rtn Sesha Sai inspired the young Interactors to celebrate leadership and vision into tomorrow's world.



Our dear Rtn Fharzana Siraj has become Rtn Dr. Fharzana Siraj! She has been awarded her Doctorate, a true testament to her hard work and dedication. Congratulations to her on this fabulous milestone and wishing her continued success.





A Rotary Youth Exchange student from India cooks lunch with her host sibling at their home in Brazil in 2023.

EARLY CONCEPTS

In 1927, Rotary International received two proposals for international youth exchanges: one suggested creating exchanges for children of Rotarians, and the other focused on exchanges for vocational purposes. The proposals, along with others that would involve youth travel, were studied by a special committee. Almost a year later, the committee acknowledged the many benefits of such exchanges but recommended that Rotary International not manage them.

A few months later, in June 1928, the Board of Directors reached a similar conclusion. The Board did not favor creating a Rotary International exchange program or establishing committees in various countries to support them. It didn't, however, discourage Rotary clubs from organizing exchanges on their own.

Only a month later, the Board had a partial change of opinion, giving "moral approval" to the efforts of Rotarians in Europe to create vocational exchanges for young people and agreeing that Rotary International's office in Zurich, Switzerland, could provide some support to interested clubs in Europe.





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