



*Let's
Inspire !*



PRESIDENT 2025-26



IR President's Message To Health and Happiness

This month's special issue of Rotary magazine is all about happiness, that most elemental of human yearnings. More than a feeling, though, this state of positive well-being, and the conditions necessary to create and sustain it, should be considered a universal right.

December also marks Rotary's Disease Prevention and Treatment Month, when we highlight our members' work to promote health and wellness, including mental wellness. Globally, nearly 1 in 7 people have a mental health disorder, according to a recent World Health Organization report. Yet only 9 per cent of people with depression receive adequate treatment. We are fortunate in Rotary to have a powerful way to support emotional well-being and happiness: friendship. The connections we build in Rotary can be a powerful force for change. I know this from personal experience. When my fellow members first proposed that I become club president, I demurred. I had a stutter. I was terrified of speaking. But having club members who supported me and surrounded me with affection enabled me to face my fear, and I found a way to stand confidently before a crowd.

The **WHO** reports that governments on average devote only 2 % of their health budgets to mental health, and only 11% of that funding reaches community-based services. In some countries, only one trained mental health professional is available for every **100,000 people**. The WHO has called for strategic and urgent action to close the gap. Rotary can answer that call by championing mental health awareness in our clubs, working with local health systems, funding training for community health workers, and supporting initiatives that bring care to places where none exists. Even small investments in mental health yield enormous returns in productivity, public health and happiness.

While we are creating lasting change in the world, we cannot forget to take care of each other. Past RI President Gordon McInally wisely reminds us that we must go beyond asking, "How are you?" We owe it to each other to instead ask, "How are you really?" As we transition to a new year filled with new possibilities, let us Unite for Good – for healing, friendship and access to happiness.

FRANCESCO AREZZO
President, Rotary International



THE FACE BEHIND THE ROLE

Rtn. Ravit Keden



Ravit Keden is a leader with 25+ years of experience in management across both corporate and non-profit organizations. As the CSO (Chief Strategic Officer) of Huliot Pipes and Fittings, Ravit had the opportunity to introduce Polypropylene (PP) pipes and water solutions, such as STP to the Indian market. Currently, Ravit is an AI expert in visual and automation processes.

Since 2022, Ravit has served in the Rural Committee, and in the year 2024-2025, she organized a contribution of 48 solar lamps to the rural areas. The funds were donated by the American Club for International Women (ACIW), where she serves as the V.P. of Charities.

In the same year, she joined the program Committee, where she assisted in organizing the weekly meetings. Ravit earned an MBA degree from Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands and a Bachelor's degree from Phoenix University in the US. In addition, she has an associate's degree in architecture.

Ravit is an active member of Indus International Trust, where she had the privilege to serve as president in the years 2015-2016 and again in the years 2021-2022. In addition, Ravit serves as the chief editor of the Mumbai Namaskar, a guidebook for people who are making their first steps as residents of Mumbai. This is a philanthropic initiative, with all proceeds going directly to beneficiaries supported by the Mumbai Connexions Club.

Outside of her professional life, Ravit loves to travel, and she enjoys solving jigsaw puzzles (1500 pieces and up), painting with oil colors on canvas, and going for long walks.

"The business of life is the acquisition of memories; in the end, that's all there is." (Downton Abbey, Season 4, Episode 9).



ANN-TASTIC MOMENTS ...

A Life of Passion, Service, Art and Philanthropy Vinita Agarwal



My Journey

My journey has been shaped by passion, purpose, creativity, and the joy of giving. As an Anne in Rotary, I have always believed that true service comes from the heart. Standing beside the Rotary family, I learned that kindness grows when shared, and every small act of support can touch countless lives.

Alongside my work in service, I am a devoted bonsai artist and painter. Nurturing a tiny tree or bringing colours to life on canvas has taught me patience, balance, and the beauty of quiet expression. These art forms are not just hobbies—they are extensions of my soul and reflections of the life philosophies I cherish.



I am also blessed with three well-settled children and five wonderful grandchildren who bring immense joy and pride to my life. Their love and achievements are my greatest strength and constant inspiration.

Whether through community projects, supporting those in need, or expressing beauty through art, philanthropy has become an essential part of my identity. My journey has never been about recognition, but about spreading compassion, creating moments of happiness, and making the world a little better in my own small ways.

With gratitude, humility, and a heart committed to service, my journey continues—with art, with purpose, and with love.

THALASSEMIA AWARENESS IN INDIA: “A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY”

Rtn. Dr Anuradha A Shah

MD(Med), DNB (Resp. Med), FCCP(USA)



Introduction

Thalassemia is one of the most common inherited blood disorders in India and poses a significant public health challenge. Despite advances in medical care, lack of awareness and inadequate screening continue to result in the birth of thousands of children with severe Thalassemia every year. Raising public awareness is crucial to reduce disease burden, prevent new cases, and improve the quality of life of affected individuals and families.

India, with its large population and high carrier frequency, has the potential to significantly reduce Thalassemia through effective education, screening, and prevention programs.

What is Thalassemia?

Thalassemia is a genetic disorder of haemoglobin synthesis that results in chronic anemia. Haemoglobin is responsible for transporting oxygen in the blood. In Thalassemia, abnormal haemoglobin leads to premature destruction of red blood cells, causing anemia and other complications.

India: Thalassemia Capital of the world 4-17% Carrier rate.



FIGURE 1.

Thalassemia is:

- Inherited (passed from parents to children)
- Not contagious
- Present from birth

Symptoms may include pallor, fatigue, poor growth, frequent infections, bone deformities, and enlargement of liver and spleen in severe cases.

Types of Thalassemia Common in India

In India, Beta thalassemia is the most prevalent form. Thalassemia Minor (Trait) – Carrier state; usually asymptomatic.

Thalassemia Intermedia – Moderate anemia

Thalassemia Major – Severe anemia requiring lifelong blood transfusions.

Carriers are healthy individuals but can pass the gene to their children.

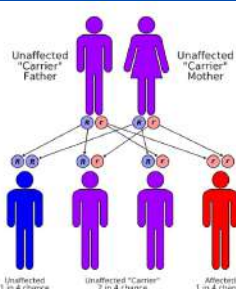


FIGURE 2.

Burden of Thalassemia in India: Key Statistics

India carries one of the highest Thalassemia burdens globally.

- Approximately 3–4% of the Indian population are carriers of beta Thalassemia.
- This translates to 35–45 million carriers nationwide.
- An estimated 10,000–15,000 children are born every year with Thalassemia major.
- Thalassemia contributes significantly to childhood morbidity and mortality.
- Annual treatment cost per child ranges from ₹1.5–2.5 lakhs, excluding complications.

Certain communities and regions show higher carrier prevalence, including:

- Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Odisha, Assam, Tamil Nadu
- Sindhis, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Bengalis, and some tribal populations.

Ref. Figure 1.



Importance of Carrier Screening in India

Since Thalassemia is inherited, carrier detection is the cornerstone of prevention.

When both parents are carriers:

- 25% chance of Thalassemia major child.
- 50% chance of carrier child.
- 25% chance of unaffected child.

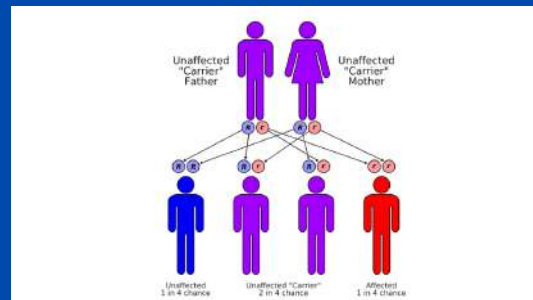
Ref. Figure 2.

Screening tests include:

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

Peripheral smear

Haemoglobin electrophoresis / HPLC



Premarital and preconception screening, especially among young adults and college students, can prevent high-risk marriages and reduce disease incidence.

Antenatal Screening and Prenatal Diagnosis

The Government of India recommends antenatal screening for hemoglobinopathies as part of maternal health services. If both partners are carriers:

- Prenatal diagnosis can be done between 10–12 weeks of pregnancy
- Techniques include chorionic villus sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis

Early diagnosis empowers families to make informed reproductive decisions and reduces emotional and financial burden.

Management of Thalassemia in India

There is no universal cure, but effective management improves survival.

- **Main Treatment Components:**
- Regular blood transfusions (every 2–4 weeks)
- Iron chelation therapy to prevent iron overload
- Monitoring of heart, liver, and endocrine organs
- Vaccinations and infection prevention

Curative Option:

Bone marrow / stem cell transplantation

- Most effective when done early
- Limited by cost, donor availability, and infrastructure

With proper care, life expectancy has improved from childhood to 30–50 years and beyond.

Psychosocial and Economic Impact

Thalassemia places a heavy burden on families:

- Frequent hospital visits.
- High treatment costs.
- Emotional stress and anxiety.
- School absenteeism in children.
- Employment and marriage challenges in adults.

Social stigma and misinformation worsen mental health outcomes. Public education can help create a more supportive and inclusive environment.

Role of Blood Donation in India.

Patients with Thalassemia depend on regular, safe blood transfusions for survival.

- India faces periodic blood shortages
- Voluntary, non-remunerated blood donation is essential
- One unit of blood can save a life.

Awareness campaigns should strongly promote regular blood donation, especially among youth.

Government Initiatives and Public Health Efforts

- India has taken several steps toward thalassemia control:
- National Health Mission (NHM) includes hemoglobinopathy screening
- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) for early detection
- State-level screening programs in Gujarat, West Bengal, Punjab, and Maharashtra
- Collaboration with NGOs and thalassemia societies.

However, coverage remains uneven, and scaling up screening is urgently needed.

Myths and Misconceptions

Common myths include:

- Thalassemia is contagious ✗
- Carriers are sick ✗
- Diet can cure thalassemia ✗

Correct information is essential to reduce stigma and promote acceptance.

Conclusion

Thalassemia is a **preventable genetic disorder**, yet it continues to affect thousands of Indian families due to lack of awareness and screening. India has the knowledge, tools, and infrastructure to significantly reduce new cases. What is needed is **widespread public education, routine carrier screening, genetic counselling, and community participation**.

Every individual can contribute—by getting tested, spreading awareness, donating blood, and supporting affected families. Together, India can move toward a future where no child is born with preventable Thalassemia.

References

1. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
2. Indian Journal of Hematology and Blood Transfusion
3. National Health Mission (NHM) Guidelines on Hemoglobinopathies
4. World Health Organization (WHO) – Thalassemia Fact Sheets
5. Thalassemia Federation of India (TFI)
6. ICMR Guidelines on Genetic Disorder

From the Editor's Desk

With five issues successfully executed, we now arrive at the close of another eventful calendar year. December always brings with it a gentle glow — a month of joy, peace, happiness, and colour. It is a time when the world seems to pause, allowing us to breathe, reflect, and appreciate the journey we have travelled so far.

As I look back at the past months, I feel a sense of gratitude for the stories we told, the voices we amplified, and the moments we captured. Yet, in the quiet corners of my mind, I still wonder what more I could have done... What conversations could have been deeper? Which ideas could have been explored further? What impact could have been stronger? Until then.....

“

Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is an act — it takes effort and practice. But over time, it should lead you to a more equitable place, with equal opportunity for all people.

Maria Arcocha White

”

Touching Lives- One Project At A Time



8th Dec'25- Thalassemia Awareness and detection camp at Smt. Kapila Khandwala College of Education- B.Ed College



14th Dec'25- Vocational Service Program at Shahpur Vidya Ratna Purushkar awards. 10 distinguished teachers were felicitated from Shahpur Taluka.



16th Dec'25- Thalassemia Awareness talk by Dr. Anuradha Shah and detection camp at Janki Devi Bajaj College of Management, SNDT campus

Touching Lives- One Project At A Time



19th Dec'25- Operation Restore Camp at National Burn Centre Navi Mumbai.



21st Dec'25- Satya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital center for Child Heart Care a project driven by Rtn. PP Suresh Gandhi.

Touching Lives- One Project At A Time



23rd Dec'25- 238 Solar lamps distributed at MOKHADA, in Palghar district.



28th Dec'25- Rotary walkathon an awareness Program for Skin & Organ donation at Powai

13th Dec'25- Sports Day at Igatpuri

A joint project between RCBN and IWCBN



1. Rtn. President Kamal Chowksi
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3. Rtn. VP Ashok Doshi
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11. Rtn. Mehul Shah & spouse Urmi
12. Rtn. Anne Dr. Sonal Agarwal
13. IWM Sangeeta Kulkarni
14. IWM & Rtn. Nargis Attaree



Upcoming Projects/ events

- 3rd Jan'26- Guest Speaker Mr. Bharat Dabholkar , Advertising legend.
- 10th Jan'26 - Pre OCV , Chief Guest is AG Preeti Gala.
- 10- 11th Jan'26- Squint eye and plastic surgery at Deolali.
- 17th Jan'26- Guest Speaker Mr. Harshad Ahirrao. Superintendent of Mumbai Central Jail
- 24th Jan'26- Guest Speaker to be announced.
- 31st Jan'26- OCV at Rooftop, Wockhardt Towers.

Once a week - Rendezvous



6th Dec'25- Reeta Gupta- Sanjeev Kumar the Actor we all loved.



20th Dec'25- RCBN AGM



27th Dec'25- Rotary Quiz hosted by RCBN and conducted by the district.

Team 2 of RCBN (Rtn Kamal Choksi & artn. Quresh Maskati) won the round 1 of Rotary Quiz south zone. 14

27th Dec'25

RCBN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS



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Members- Rtn. Yash Kale, Rtn. Shirish Tare
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