

INDO-AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

July 2024



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President's Message

Dear members of IAPA,

Greetings,

I hope you are doing well. I can't believe how quickly the first year of my presidency has gone by. I am pleased to announce that the 45th annual meeting of 2024, which took place on May 5th at Rumi Event Place in NYC, was a great success. Approximately 160-175 members and supporters attended. Our EC, EEC, and BOT worked hard to make it a memorable event, each playing a unique role in ensuring it was pleasant and exciting. You can find the event report in this newsletter.

This event was made possible thanks to the support of our sponsors. The most memorable part of the meeting was seeing the happiness on people's faces and making new connections. I will cherish the delightful mix of food, celebration, and dancing for a long time.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Viswanathan as he assumes the presidency of the American Psychiatric Association. His message covered his early life, and this year's Lifestyle Psychiatry theme was heartwarming. He is the second Indian-origin president of the APA after Dr. Dilip Jeste.

Last year, we accomplished many things and initiated new events. This year will be no different. We will announce the dates well in advance. Dr. Rao and I are organizing non-CME educational programs focusing on diversity and other issues not commonly taught during our residency years. I urge everyone to attend and support the speakers.

Dr. Rikin Patel has finished his fellowship and will be replaced by Dr. Kaushal Shah as an MIT representative. I thank Rikin for his service, and we hope he will continue to contribute to IAPA activities.

I encourage you to bring new members to IAPA. I appreciate your membership and support of IAPA activities.

To access the newsletter, please click on the [image on the right to open a PDF version](#) or visit MYIAPA.org and click on the July 2024 newsletter. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have and invite you to reach out to me at president@myiapa.org.

Best regards,

Tarak Vasavada, MD
IAPA President 2023-25
president@myiapa.org

Ramaswamy Viswanathan, M.D., Dr.Med.Sc., Assumes Office of APA President

Edited from APA Psychiatric News



Ramaswamy Viswanathan, M.D., Dr.Med.Sc., a longtime advocate for mental health, medical educator, and clinician-researcher, began his term as president of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) after the organization's 2024 Annual Meeting in New York City.

Viswanathan recounted his journey as an immigrant, beginning with the loss of his father as a toddler in India. "When I was two years old, my father died of a heart attack at the age of 42," he said. "My mother, who had not finished high school and was not working, was left to care for five young children, of whom I was the youngest. "To this day, a painful aspect of my life is that I have no memory of my father. In Indian society in those days, if you were without a father, your social standing was demoted. However, I was blessed by the mentoring of many family members, teachers, and even strangers who showed kindness and a special interest in me. ... My experience in my personal and professional life has been shaped by those around me, my family and friends, my colleagues, and professional peers."

"I am grateful for the trust my fellow APA members have placed in me by electing me to help lead our organization, and I am excited for the year ahead," said Viswanathan. I look forward to working closely with colleagues at APA and around the globe to affirm APA's role as a leading voice in psychiatry."

Viswanathan noted that he was the first person of color to be elected president of the Brooklyn Psychiatric Society and is now the first person from Brooklyn to be elected president of APA. "In this moment, I remember my mother. Her only goal in life was that all the children finish high school. How nice it would be if she were alive today to see the position her son has risen to. ... This country has given me and countless other immigrants immense opportunities."

As the 2024-2025 APA President, Viswanathan's priorities are to:

- **Focus on lifestyle interventions for positive mental and physical health through a holistic approach to wellness**, including exercise, nutrition, sleep, social connectedness, stress reduction, and avoidance of risky behaviors. They will be promoted in conjunction with other Psychiatric treatment modalities.
- Promote education, research, and appropriate use of technology, including AI.

- Address practice burden, workforce issues, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Continue his existing legislative push for parity in mental health and access to care.
- Elevate the voice of psychiatry in America on issues such as the youth mental health crisis, social determinants of health, and climate change.

Dr. Vis is a past president of IAPA. Let us congratulate and support him.

IAPA 45th Annual Meeting at NYC Highlights

The 45th Annual Meeting of the Indo-American Psychiatric Association (IAPA) occurred on Sunday, May 5th, 2024, at the prestigious Rumi Event Space in New York, NY. The scientific meeting was a unique opportunity for all in the afternoon. The program began with welcome remarks and continued with poster presentations from three MIT poster award winners. For the first time, members in training and residency applicants gave oral presentations to the esteemed attendees. Dr. Vani Rao gave an outstanding academician lecture on "Neuropsychiatric problems after Traumatic brain injury," and Dr. Prakash Masand gave a sponsored talk on mood disorder medication. Both presentations were well received, and the afternoon session concluded with a business meeting.

The evening program began with members networking and enjoying Indian appetizers. The keynote speaker, CEO of Sheppard Pratt, Harsh Trivedi, MD, delivered a stimulating presentation on "Authentic Leadership: Navigating a Tumultuous World." The evening concluded with an award ceremony to recognize outstanding contributions. The recipients were Dr. Vani Rao for the Outstanding Academician award, Dr. John Johnson for the Outstanding Public Sector award, Dr. Arun Munjal from Georgia for the Outstanding IAPA Service award, and Dr. Rikin Patel from Duke University for the Outstanding Resident Award. Dr. Saul Levine was also given a special award for his dedication to IAPA and IMG. The platinum sponsor, PRMS, also distributed raffle prizes to the members. Various dignitaries, including APA president Dr. Petros Levounis, APA president-elect Dr. Viswanathan, APA CEO and Medical Director Dr. Saul Levine, Incoming CEO Dr. Marketa Wills, and IPS president Dr. Rathi attended the meeting.

The evening event concluded with an elegant Indian buffet, and the younger attendees enjoyed dancing to Bollywood music late into the night. The highlight of the annual meeting was the chance to reconnect with old acquaintances, forge new connections, and commemorate the distinctive culture while actively participating in the APA annual meeting.

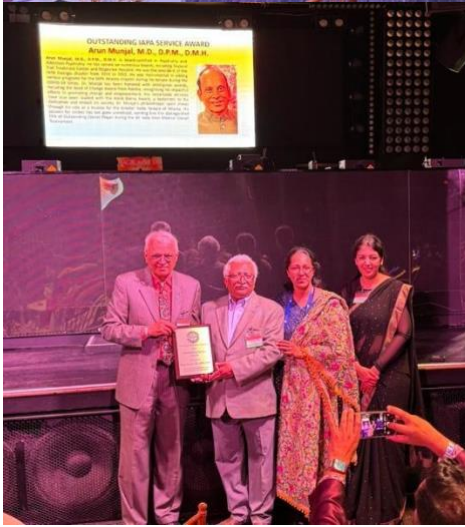
We highly encourage you to attend the meeting next year in Los Angeles.

Enjoy some of the highlighted pictures.

IAPA Annual Meeting in Pictures









Welcome Vanita Sahasranaman as IAPA Councilor



Vanita Sahasranaman, MD, is a Board-Certified adult psychiatrist who currently works with adults diagnosed with serious mental illnesses at one of the largest community mental health centers in South Florida. Before her current role, she was a Senior Social and Behavioral Health Researcher at the University of South Florida's (USF) Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health (currently known as the Florida Center for Behavioral Health Improvements and Solutions). During her time with the Florida Medicaid Drug Therapy Management Program for Behavioral Health, Dr. Sahasranaman helped secure grant funding for state programs, develop, implement, and measure the impact of statewide programs to improve the quality of behavioral health services throughout the state of Florida; monitored trends in psychotherapeutic prescribing practices among the Florida Medicaid population; developed online resources for Florida prescribers; organized statewide expert panel meetings with local and national experts; and helped develop, edit, and distribute multiple Florida Best Practice Guidelines, which have been recognized on a state and national level. She received her undergraduate degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, her medical degree from the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL, and completed her residency training in adult psychiatry at Rosalind Franklin University/Chicago Medical School in North Chicago, Illinois.

Welcome Kaushal Shah as a Member in Trainee Representative of the IAPA



Kaushal Shah, MD, MPH, MBA, is a senior psychiatry resident at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. With a diverse background spanning healthcare, business, and leadership, he holds a Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Business Administration (MBA), and Leadership Studies. Dr. Shah's career includes a significant leadership role in a Fortune 100 company, where he contributed to a breakthrough in psychiatric drug approval. His professional interests focus on clinical practice, research, and academia, particularly in Child and Adolescent and Interventional Psychiatry. He has co-authored numerous peer-reviewed articles in medical journals and actively participates in scientific conferences globally. Dr. Shah is dedicated to mentoring and teaching medical students and IMGs. He was recognized with Top Research Awards from the North Carolina Psychiatric Association (NCPA) and Wake Forest University. In 2023, he received the APA Resident Recognition Award for his outstanding clinical excellence, compassion, leadership, and community service, affirming his impactful contributions to psychiatry.

APA Annual Meeting: IAPA Invited Presentation at the Subspecialty Presidential Session



Dr. Petros Levounis, president of APA, invited IAPA to present at the subspecialty presidential session. Dr. Tanuja Gandhi, the IAPA president-elect, led and organized the symposium on **PARENTING, CONFLICT, AND CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH: AN ASIAN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**. IAPA thanks presenters, Drs. Raman Baweja, Karuna Poddar, Manan Shah,

Tanuja Gandhi, and Tarak Vasavada, for working on delivering this well-received symposium.

Next year's theme of APAAM2025 is Lifestyle medicine, and if you are interested, please let us know.

APA Annual Meeting 2024: The APA president invited a Joint symposium from IAPA, IPS, and BIPA



APA president invited a joint symposium from the Indo-American Psychiatric Association, Indian Psychiatric Society, and British Indian Psychiatric Association. The presentation was on **Alcohol Use Disorder from an Indian perspective in a different continent**. Dr. Tarak Vasavada, president of IAPA; Laxmikanth Rathi, president of the Indian

Psychiatric Society; Bhavna Chawda, British Indian Psychiatrist Association president; and Amrit Joshi from IPS, presented and covered the topic.

It was refreshing to see a large group of Indian Psychiatrists joining the presentation.

Congratulations to the APA Annual Meeting MindGames Master Winner, Dr. Badr Ratnakaran

The inaugural MindGames Masters Competition was held on Monday, May 6, at the 2024 APA Annual Meeting in New York City.



The Jeopardy-style event, similar to the MindGames for psychiatry trainees, is hosted by the APA for psychiatrists. Three participants, chosen based on their scores in a self-assessment online test, competed in a one-hour game. The live competition featured questions testing participants' knowledge of various psychiatry topics. Interestingly, all participants were of Indian origin. Dr. **Viswanathan** initially took the lead, followed by **Dr. Durga Bestha**. However, **Dr. Badr Ratnakaran**, a Geriatric

Psychiatrist at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in Roanoke, Virginia, and the new Chair for the APA Council on Geriatric Psychiatry, took the lead and maintained it throughout the game. The audience was impressed to see Dr. Vis, the APA president-elect, finding time to showcase his knowledge. Congratulations to Dr. Ratnakaran for winning the MindGames Masters and inspiring others to follow his example. The MindGames Masters is an excellent opportunity for psychiatrists to display their knowledge in psychiatry and take home the bragging rights of being a MindGames Master. The IAPA encourages all its members to consider participating in the MindGames Masters competition in the upcoming APA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, CA, in May 2025.

Interested in APA's Psychiatry Innovation Lab?

Initiated in 2016, the Psychiatry Innovation Lab aims to identify and support innovative ideas that can transform mental health care. **Manu Suresh Sharma, M.D.**, chair of APA's Committee on Innovation, led this year's event. The Psychiatry Innovation Lab is poised to return in 2025 at the APA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. This exciting event will continue to bring together psychiatric leaders and experts from business, technology, medicine, and government, providing a platform for aspiring leaders in mental health technology. Read more here if you have innovative ideas and want to pitch them at the next APA annual meeting.

<https://www.psychiatry.org/Psychiatrists/Education/Mental-Health-Innovation-Zone/Psychiatry-Innovation-Lab>

Members' Spotlight: Dr. Gogineni



Rama Rao Gogineni., MD, MFT, is a Kakatiya Medical College, Osmania University graduate. He completed his Psychiatry residency at the University of Pennsylvania and a child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellowship at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. He was trained in Family therapy and psychoanalysis. He is a professor of psychiatry and Senior Educator in Developmental psychiatry at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University. He is an active, contributing member of the US and world psychiatric organizations. To his credit, he has more than 50 publications and several presentations. He is the editor of four

books: WASP Textbook on Social Psychiatry; Besides Family: Extending the Orbit of Psychic Development; Fatherhood Scenarios Development, Culture, Psychopathology, and Treatment; Eastern Religions, Spirituality, and Psychiatry, and recognition by IAPA and APA.

He received the George Tarjan Award, which recognizes physicians who have significantly contributed to enhancing the integration of IMGs into American psychiatry.

Upcoming Events/ Save the date

We are gearing up to plan several educational seminars. Dr. Vani Rao, BOT chair, has taken the lead in organizing those. We are starting our series on diverse education, which is usually not found in textbooks but is still important in our practice and life. The first talk is by **Dr. Sunil Khushalani on "Portrayal of suicide in Hindi Cinema" on 8/8/24 at 6 PM EST.**

We will return with some other topics bimonthly. All members are welcome to suggest topics or express their willingness to talk.

We also plan to arrange our virtual poster session for residency applicants and medical students in September. Stay tuned.

Mark Your Calendar.

Title of Talk: Portrayal of Suicide in Hindi Cinema

Date: Thursday, August 8th at 6-7 pm

Presenter: Dr. Sunil Khushalani

A Zoom link will be provided in a few days.

Education Corner: Lifestyle Psychiatry: The Six Dimension Theory



As incoming APA President Ramaswamy Viswanathan, M.D., Dr.Med.Sc., set out to identify a theme for his presidential year, he wanted to choose something that members could act on immediately to help improve their patient's mental and physical health. The answer? **“Lifestyle for Positive Physical and Mental Health.”**

“I have chosen this theme because the data show us that when an effort is made to live a healthier lifestyle, outcomes for physical and mental health and life expectancy all improve,” he said at the Opening Session of APA’s 2024 Annual Meeting today. “Many avoidable health conditions and premature deaths can be attributed to an unhealthy lifestyle.”

He continued, “Lifestyle interventions should be offered in addition to psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, other somatic therapy, and attention to social determinants of health, not only to ameliorate or cure illnesses but to help people lead positive, meaningful lives.”

Viswanathan noted the six pillars of lifestyle medicine: regular exercise, a plant-based diet with minimal or no processed foods, restorative sleep, stress reduction, avoidance of harmful substances, and positive social connectedness. He said 80% of health care spending in this country is for treating conditions attributable to unhealthy lifestyle choices.

The “six dimensions” theory was born in the late 70s when well-regarded lifestyle coach Dr. Bill Hettler developed a wellness paradigm based on six key pillars. You can find more at the [National Wellness Institute](#).

- 1. Physical:** embrace a healthy lifestyle. Eat and sleep well. Control your habits
- 2. Emotional:** Watch and assess your emotions. Emotions will make you or break you.
- 3. Spiritual:** This means venturing beyond the physical realm of your existence and embracing the concept that your life has meaning and purpose.
- 4. Intellectual:** New learning, cultivating hobbies and creativity
- 5. Environmental:** Stroll around the neighborhood, tend to your garden, or plan a nature-centric adventure; never underestimate the healing powers of fresh air.
- 6. Social:** Strengthen and nurture your social connections. Loneliness will bring ill mental and physical health.

“There is considerable evidence for the effectiveness of lifestyle interventions in physical and mental health,” he continued. “Neuroimaging shows an increase in hippocampal brain volume after 12 weeks of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise in patients with schizophrenia and normal controls, and this is accompanied by a reduction in negative symptoms and improved cognitive functioning. Patients with moderate depression improve as much when treated with an exercise program as when treated with an SSRI, both partly acting by stimulating the release of brain-derived neurotrophic factor that promotes hippocampal growth.”

Viswanathan said he will work with the APA Caucus on Lifestyle Psychiatry and other components to develop a curriculum on lifestyle medicine and psychiatry for trainees and APA members, disseminate this knowledge, and encourage practitioners and health care systems to implement lifestyle interventions and promote research in this area. He also plans to work with the APA Foundation to incorporate promoting a healthy lifestyle into the Foundation’s current activities and programs, such as the [Mental Health Care Works](#) campaign.

Members' Book Publications:

We are starting to include information about recent books published by our members. If you have authored a book and want to be featured in the newsletter, please send us the information.

IAPA Chapter Updates:

Do you have any updates on your IAPA state or local chapter activities? If you want your state or local IAPA chapter activities featured in the IAPA newsletter, contact IAPA at IAPAnewsletter@gmail.com.

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Click the link below to read the latest articles from the Indian Journal of Psychiatry. Content is free to explore and download.

<https://journals.lww.com/indianjpsychiatry/pages/currenttoc.aspx>

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The journal publishes high-quality empirical original research and reviews articles about all psychiatric practices and research domains. The journal caters to mental health professionals and trainees, including psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses, academic psychiatrists (medical education), allied disciplines, and other medical professionals and paraprofessionals.

You can access the journal here. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/szj>

If you are interested in writing an article, contact them at editor@ijpm.info

Are you interested in Contributing to the IAPA Newsletter? We need you!

We want to highlight the work of our IAPA members in the newsletter. If you would like to contribute, we invite you to send any article you have written, such as a clinical topic, poem, humor piece, or synopsis of your work. Please send it to us at japanewsletter@gmail.com.

Chapter Support:

IAPA leadership would be delighted to support chapter activities, reviving existing chapters and creating new chapters. Feel free to contact the IAPA president or any EC/EEC members if interested.

**Thank you for being so supportive and part of the IAPA family!
We encourage our readers to join IAPA. Please spread the word among your colleagues to join our growing organization!**

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