# Association for Socially Applicable Research

# ASAR

# ANNUAL REPORT (2022-2023)

# Hello and welcome to ASAR's third yearly official report!

ASAR was informally formed in February 2018 but was legally registered as a Section 8 non-profit company under the Government of India on October 31st, 2020.

The past year has been exciting with a growing family of members, newer research projects, and exciting new collaborations. Read on to know more!

# The growing ASAR family and changing ASAR structure

ASAR started this year with around 30 members and today has grown to 80 total volunteers (including members and interns). In the past year, we restructured the organization into teams for better management. The management team consisted of our co-founders (Siddhesh, Sweta, and Surabhi), and 2 different heads for internal management over the course of the year (**Jatin Terde and Preeyati Chopra**). We also designated a social media and public relations team which was started by **Ashmeet Sachdev** and Avanti Andhale and is currently managed by **Preeyati Chopra and Sana Lokhandwala.** Recruitment of new members took place through a preliminary form on the website, followed by an interview with the management team.

Each ASAR project had a separate working group on Whatsapp/ Telegram and a common group where the ASAR family could interact with each other. It is with the grit and dedication of our interns and members that we are still standing and hope to keep fighting to help solve the social problems in India. ASAR was blessed to have the help of **Asha Rathor**, our CS who helped us navigate the legal aspects of running a company. We would also like to thank our CA, **Mr. Yugendra Nagpure** who helped us navigate the financial aspects of managing a non-profit organization

# Our Research

With newer members with varied educational qualifications, ASAR's work has now expanded to include broader themes of pediatric health, oncology, palliative care, mental health, climate change, violence against healthcare workers, and communicable and non-communicable diseases to name a few. We have continued and further expanded our work in the health sector to create high-resolution nationwide estimates for India's national surgical planning, creating and validating a comprehensive geo locations database of public and private healthcare facilities. We have initiated new collaborations with the Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma, and Anaesthesia Care (G4 Alliance), Mariwala Health Initiative's Alliance for Suicide Prevention, Pallium India, and Researching the Impact of Attacks on Healthcare (RIAH). ASAR's research has been published in impactful and prestigious outlets like The Lancet, The British Medical Journal Global Health, Lancet Global Health, and Lancet Regional Health among others. We have published evidence-based advocacy op-eds in popular media outlets like The Wire - Science, Think Global Health, Harvard Public Health Review, Global Health Now, and Hindustan Times. Our members and interns have presented our work at several national and international conferences.

## Journal Articles:

1. Ending violence against healthcare workers in India: A bill for a billion ([Link](#))

2. Solving endgame problems for 1·4 billion people in India ([Link](#))

3. Evaluating Status of Lancet Commission on Global Surgery Indicators for India ([Link](#))

4. Phase-wise Impact Analysis of the Indian National Lockdown against COVID-19 Outcomes ([Link](#))

5. Roadblocks and Solutions to Planning Surgical Care for a Billion Indians ([Link](#))

6. Yes to pluralistic health system, but no to homoeopathy ([Link](#))

## Evidence-based Op-Eds:

1. HPV Vaccination and the Quest to Solve India's Cervical Cancer Problem ([Link](#))

2. Monkeypox in India—Facing the World's Latest Health Threat ([Link](#))

3. A Clear Fix for a Common Birth Defect in India ([Link](#))

4. Heat, Dust, Fever ([Link](#))

5. Cancer Care Is Improving – But at Different Rates for Different People in India ([Link](#))

6. When Will India End Violence Against Health Workers? ([Link](#))

7. Could telemedicine make universal health care a reality in India? ([Link](#))

8. India's policies should view human resources for health ([Link](#))

9. Rural areas need human resources for health ([Link](#))

10. Achieving sustainable development goal targets for health workforce ([Link](#))

11. Where does India stand with its human resources for health? ([Link](#))

12. Are we measuring our health workforce shortage right? ([Link](#))

## Abstracts selected for presentations on social issues in eminent conferences:

1. Population-Level Access to Palliative Care Services in India: State-wise Analysis of 526 Facilities (Be-cause Health, March 2022)

2. Synthesizing Geo database of surgical care facilities in India (SUCUGH 2022, October 2022)

3. Surgical Rates and Need in Rural India: Retrospective Analysis of 666 Districts and 36 States and Union Territories (CUGH, April 2022)

4. Prioritization of Sex, Gender and Sexuality-based Differences in Mental Health Needs in the United States of America: Policy Analysis (APHA, November 2022)

5. Surgical workforce production capacity in India: A retrospective analysis of postgraduate and super-specialty residency spots distribution (AAGS Fall Assembly, October 2022)

6. A Retrospective Analysis of Surgical Training Capacity in India (ICS-US International Scholarship Competition, March 2023)

## ASAR's evidence-based blogs on social issues:

1. Blood Banking in the Land of Maharajas - Rajasthan ([Link](#))

2. Social Expenditure in India ([Link](#))

3. A Bite that Kills - Mosquito-Related Diseases in India ([Link](#))

4. Mental Health: The Overlooked Aspect of Cancer Care ([Link](#))

5. The Scary Numbers of Suicides in India - Time to Really Care ([Link](#))

6. Disparity in Contraceptive Use in India - Numbers Reveal Reality ([Link](#))

7. Emergency Maternal Care: The Missing Piece of the Puzzle ([Link](#))

8. Make Mental Health and Well-Being for all a Global Priority ([Link](#))

# ASAR Talks

On Sundays at 9 pm, ASAR invites experts from the social research sector to talk about their work. The talks are free, open to the general public, and a wonderful forum to inspire and give direction to our young social researchers.

In the past year, some of the free talks we arranged were as follows:

1. **Dr. Abhay Bang**, the Director of the Society for Education Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), Gadchiroli. He served as a Commissioner on the High-Level Expert Group on Universal Health Coverage for India (2012) and headed the first expert committee on Tribal Health in India.
   Topic: Tribal Health in Global Health

2. **Dr. Ashwini Deshpande** is an economist and the founding director of the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) at Ashoka University.
   Topic: Affirmative Action- Myths and Facts

# ASAR Journal Clubs

Journal clubs (JCs) are a venture meant to help our members and interns to be better equipped in understanding and thus, conducting research. Coordinated by one of our enthusiastic interns: Shirish Rao, ASAR members are provided a platform to learn through regular reading, discussion, and critical evaluation of papers published in peer-reviewed journals. Papers for the JC are either chosen by the presenters or given to them by the management team, such that they fulfil a Specific Learning Objective (SLO).

This year, we conducted three JCs:

## JOURNAL CLUB 1

Date: 30th June 2022 an

Time: 6 pm IST

Platform: Zoom

Presenter: Sharvari Mande

Learning Objectives:

- To know about the six essential components of surgical care.
- To know how the components of surgical care work together to affect the overall procedure and well-being of the patient.
- To know ASAR's work in the same.

## JOURNAL CLUB 2

Date: 9th and 10th July 2022

Time: 6 pm IST

Platform: Zoom

Presenter: Aamir Miyajiwala

Learning Objectives:

- To know how can geocoding help in knowing the gaps in healthcare location-wise,

enabling the administration to put its focus there.

- To learn more about ASAR's work, the IndoHeal Map.

## JOURNAL CLUB 3

Date: 31st July 2022

Time: 6 pm IST

Platform: Zoom

Presenter: Dr Avanti Andhale

Learning objectives:

- To understand the key areas that need to be kept in mind as far as cancer research is concerned.
- To understand the discordance or imbalance between cancer research data in HICs vs LMICs and LICs.

# ASAR Workshops

ASAR Workshops is a new venture meant to help our members and interns to be better equipped in understanding and thus, conducting research. Coordinated by our interns, ASAR members are provided with a platform to learn through the discussion on different aspects of research skill development. Topics for the Workshop are either chosen by the presenters or given to them by the management team, such that they fulfil a Specific Learning Objective (SLO).

A series of research methodology workshops were organized to simplify certain concepts commonly encountered in the research arena. These workshops were well received for their simplicity, and relevance and for the hands-on interaction that was encouraged between participants and the speaker.

This year, we conducted two workshops:

1. **Introduction to Systematic Reviews**

   Speaker: Dr. Vini Mehta

   Date: 7th May 2022

2. **Hands-on Online Workshop on Biostatistics and Data Analysis**

   Speaker: Yash Kamath

   Date: 5th June 2022

   Systematic Review workshop - 7th May 2022

# Our Collaborations

In the past year, we have continued our collaborations from the year 2021-22, with continuing as the official knowledge partner for the Lancet Citizens' Commission - 'Reimagining India's Health System'. We are a permanent council member of the Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma, and Anaesthesia Care (G4 Alliance), one of the world's biggest networks advocating for SOTA care. We initiated a collaboration with Mariwala Health Initiative's Alliance for Suicide Prevention which opens up several opportunities for us including funding for mental health-related projects and Pallium India, one of the pioneering groups in the country and around the globe working towards palliative care access. We also initiated a collaboration with Researching the Impact of Attacks on Healthcare (RIAH) to improve the understanding of the nature, frequency, scale, and impact of attacks on healthcare in conflict through improved data collection and analysis. We continued our work in collaboration with researchers at the Department of Surgery at Duke University School of Medicine, Duke Global Health Institute, University of California Berkeley, Insecurity Insights, and the National Institute of Ayurveda, among others. We have continued our advocacy-focused collaborations with the student organizations like the Rotaract Club of Caduceus. We also initiated a collaboration with the Pune Institute of Computer Technology for our project 'IndoHealMap.'

# Other Activities

This year ASAR started its own monthly e-newsletter which is a summary of all our monthly activities to our team members as well as the readership who sign up for our newsletter. We've currently released 4 issues of the newsletter.

We are also proud to have conducted 3 "ASAR Sabhas/ Townhall Meets" in the past year where our members interacted with each other and spoke about their work. These meetings were the brewing pot for most of ASAR's awesome ideas!

# Looking Ahead

We are off to a kick-ass beginning but there is still a long road ahead. We envision building a culture of evidence-based problem-solving in Indian policy-making. We aspire to inspire and train young researchers to contribute to building the requisite evidence for social problem-solving in India. In the coming year, we will shift a little bit of our focus toward acquiring funding to help us keep our research activities afloat. We will also be searching for avenues to help convey our research findings to bureaucrats and policymakers. And of course, we will keep taking on newer research projects that our members and followers think are the need of the hour. If you think you can help us in this regard, please do reach out and we shall be grateful.

Thank you for reading!


With love,

Team ASAR

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