As part of the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Indian Air Force and golden jubilee celebrations of the Institute of Aerospace Medicine, IAF, a Continuing Medical Education programme on Space Medicine was held at IAM, IAF from 25th to 27th May 2007. A total of 105 service medical officers from Army, Navy and Air Force participated in this inter-command CME. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists from Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum and SDSC, Sriharikota also attended the CME and shared their valuable inputs.

In the inaugural session, a tribute was paid to the spirit of IAF in its seventy five year journey from its inception to its current status in the world. The Chief guest, Air Mshl GS Chaudhry A VSM VSM, AOC-in-C Training Command IAF, in his inaugural address, emphasized on the importance of the space program for the IAF from the strategic point of view. The Chief guest also released the commemorative issue of the Indian Journal of Aerospace Medicine (IJASM) which was published to celebrate the spirit of the practice of Aerospace Medicine in India through 50 years of publishing journey of the IJASM.

This was followed by the address of Air Mshl JK Gupta A VSM PHS, DGMS (Air) who is also the President, Indian Society of Aerospace Medicine (ISAM). The first keynote address was delivered by Dr S Swaminathan, Group Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum on ‘Indian Manned Space Programme’ and the second keynote address was delivered by Air Cmde Pankaj Tyagi VSM, Commandant, IAM on ‘Romance to Reality: Aeromedical status of Indian journey into Space’.

There were seven scientific sessions in the CME staggered over two days which covered various important aspects of space medicine. On 25 June 07, the scientific sessions covered some of the important areas of space medicine such as Life in Space, Physics of Space Flight, Space life sciences Research, Ergonomic Challenges of Space Flight, Space Environment, Water, Food, Hygiene and Waste Management, Emergency Survival Systems, Space Accidents, Micro-environment of the Space Suit and Future Challenges in Space Mission. On 26 June 07, the scientific sessions focussed on Astronaut Selection and Training, Radiation protection, Space Medical Facilities, Psycho-sociological issues of Spaceflight and Neuro-sensory System in Space. The scientific papers presented in these sessions were followed by interactive sessions with the delegates.

On the evening of 26 Jun 07, the Jubilee Memorial Lecture on ‘India’s Space Endeavour’ was delivered by Air Mshl BK Pandey PVSM AVSM VM (Retd), former AOC-in-C, Training Command, IAF.

The concluding day of the CME witnessed discussions of the Working Groups on Space formed to look into the aeromedical issues related to the Indian Manned Space Program.

In addition to the scientific sessions, there were also poster presentations on topics such as Anatomy of Space Suits, Pioneering Women Astronauts, Extra Vehicular Activity in Space and Mechanics of Space Orbits. An exhibition on satellite and launch vehicle models was organised by ISRO as part of the CME.

The CME provided a formidable platform for interaction among aviation medicine specialists, doctors from the allied specialties and scientists leading to the exchange of information, ideas and expertise. The CME provided up to date information and scientific advances directed towards the space medicine issues of today and the future. The exchange of information among the participants will be critical to the advancement of space medicine in the coming years.
Glimpses from Continuing Medical Education (CME) on Space Medicine