

ABSTRACT of paper submitted for presentation at
“2010 Mayo Spiritual Care Research Conference”

November 4 & 5, 2010 at Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA.

“Counseling the SAI Way
- Spirituality based counseling in a tertiary care hospital.”

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Department of Counseling,
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Bangalore, India.

This paper describes the complementary counseling therapy routinely provided for all patients admitted to Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences Bangalore, India, founded by Sathya Sai Baba in 2001. The hospital provides free tertiary care in cardiac and neurosciences with state-of-art facilities.

Sai Baba’s secular philosophy of the omnipotence of God, common to all religions, integrated with the Rogerian Person Centered Counseling as the academic model constitutes the basis for “Counseling the SAI Way”, providing emotional support and fostering the innate spirituality in the patients - to help heal. Practicing the core human values – truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence is in essence spirituality. The mind is the key to the perception of illness. “Mind alone is the cause for either bondage or liberation” and prayer to the “God of your choice” helps in discrimination and liberation. Love is fundamental to human nature and the fountainhead from which emanate all healing emotions.

Body relaxation, concentration on the movement of the life giving breath, “Prana”, mind cleansing – expelling toxic emotions - leads to introspection, change in perception and awareness of the inherent spiritual strength dormant within. Prayer and visualization of “Your God” is integral to the process. Patients are counseled on admission prior to surgery, post surgery and on day of discharge. An emotional-spiritual profile of every patient is maintained. The uniqueness of the program necessitated developing an in-house counselor training program. Special counselor skills are required to address patients predominantly of low socio-economic status characterized by low literacy, diverse languages and cultural differences.

Creating an evidence base in this setting is challenging. Clinical experience from treating over thirty thousand patients has provided empirical evidence to postulate that there is significant improvement in the patient hospital experience and in their quality of life after surgery. Sample case histories are presented.

Conference session participants' learning objectives.

Upon completion of this session the participants should be able to

- Understand and reflect upon the concept that spirituality can be the practice of the core human values.
- Have a basic understanding of Sai Baba's teachings and the secular Sai philosophy in the context of the presentation.
- Appreciate the merits and realize the potential of integrative medicine comprising modern technology driven medicine complemented by spirituality based counseling.
- Comprehend that acquiring counseling skills require both inner and outer transformation beyond a knowledge base.
- Ponder and focus their thoughts on the emerging trend towards globalization of medicine and medical care.

2010 MAYO SPIRITUAL CARE RESEARCH CONFERENCE
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, USA. - Nov.04 and 05 2010.

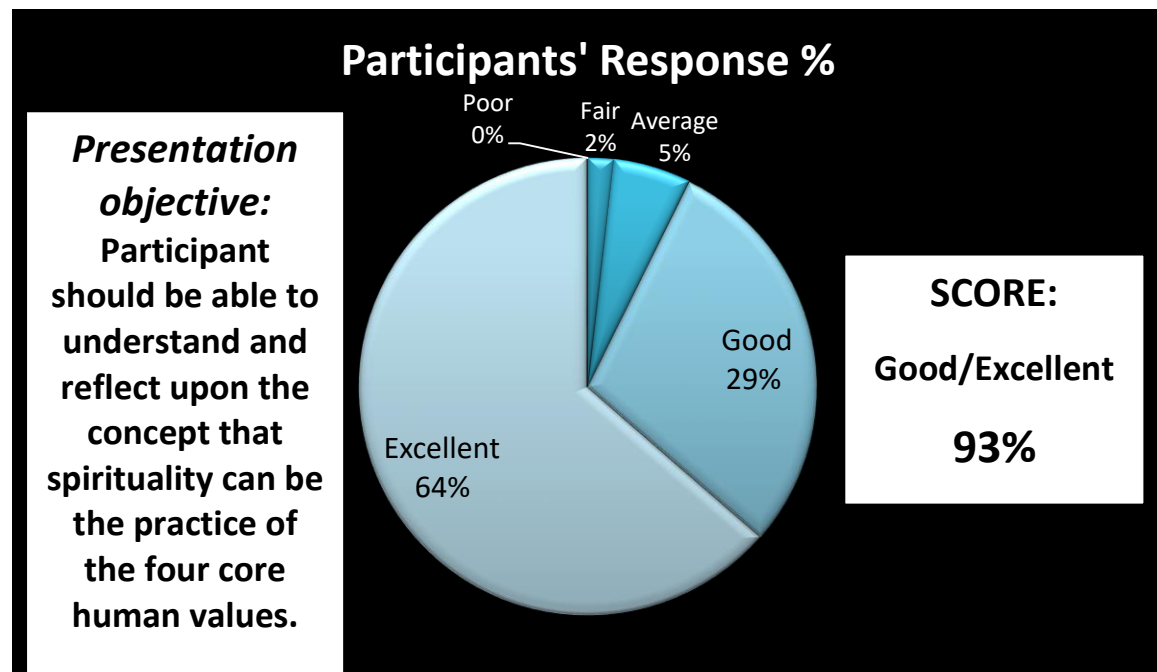
**Results of EVALUATION by Session participants
of presentation #51 on 05-11-2010**

***Counseling the SAI Way: Spirituality Based Counseling in a
Tertiary Care Hospital.***

Presenters:

Umesh Rao and Gita Umesh,

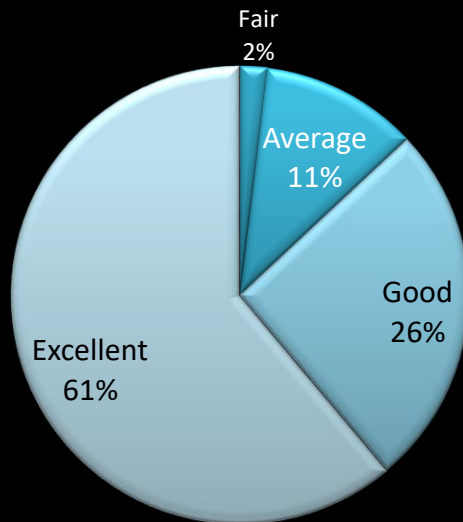
Department of Counselling, Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences,
Whitefield, Bangalore, India.



Presentation objective:

Participant should be able to understand Sai Baba's teachings and the secular SAI philosophy in the context of the presentation

Participants' Response%



SCORE:

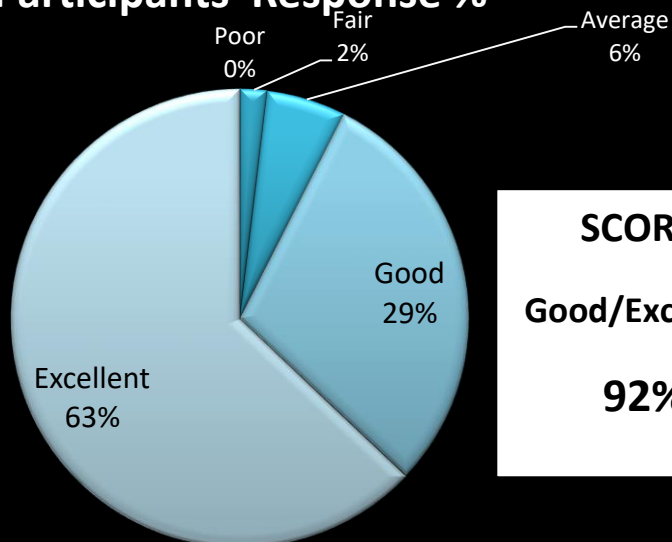
Good/Excellent

87%

Presentation objective:

The participant should be able to realize the potential of integrative medicine comprising modern technology driven medicine complemented by spirituality based counseling.

Participants' Response %



SCORE:

Good/Excellent

92%

***Presentation
objective:***

The participant should be able to comprehend that acquiring counseling skills requires both inner and outer transformation beyond a knowledge base.

Participants' Response %



SCORE:

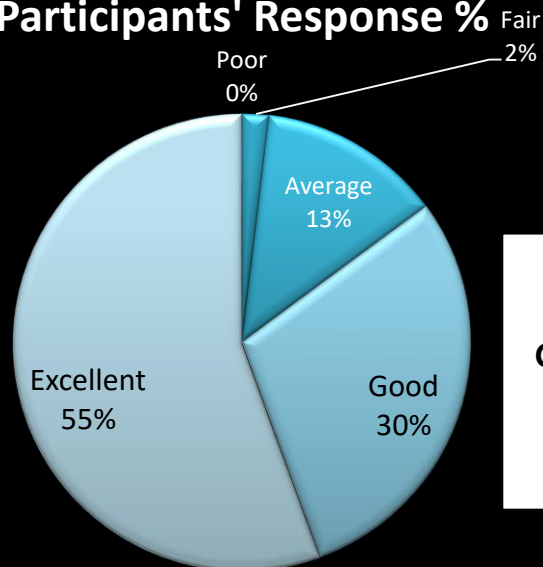
Good/Excellent

87%

***Presentation
objective:***

The participant should be able to ponder and focus their thoughts on the emerging trends towards globalization of medicine and medical care.

Participants' Response %



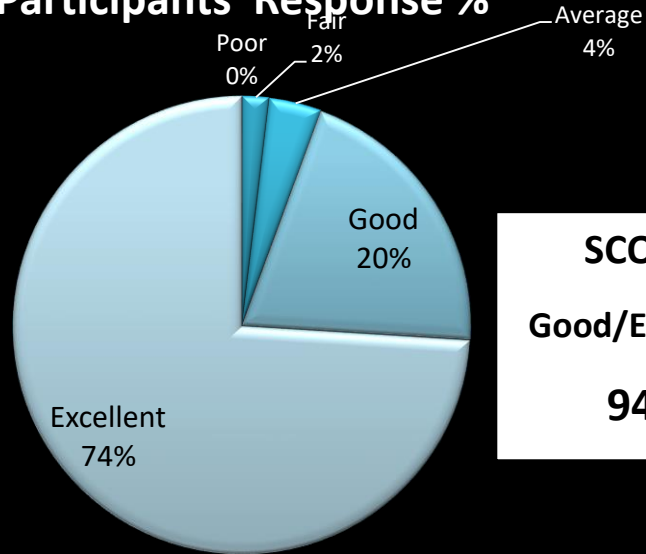
SCORE:

Good/Excellent

85%

Participants' Response %

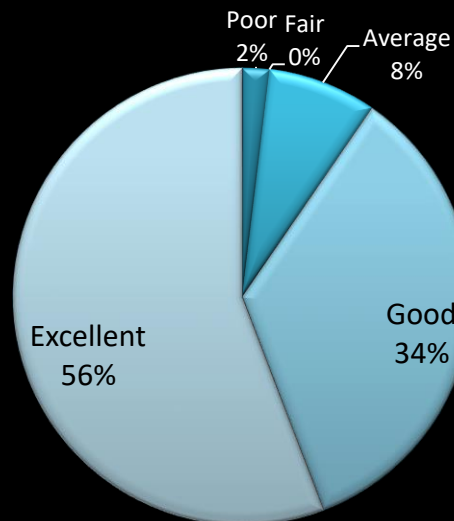
Presenters' knowledge of subject matter.



SCORE:
Good/Excellent
94%

Participants' Response %

Overall, how would you rate this session?



SCORE:
Good/Excellent
90%

Comments about the presentation from the session participants.

- **Was very nice to have the depth of a different culture than we usually get and found their work very inspiring.**
- ***Loved hearing about how spirituality is incorporated into patients' hospitalization.***
- **I loved this presentation** - especially their style which forced me to do more listening, deeper presence - less note taking, trusting I would get what I needed. I can see how that would be frustrating for some (it was for me initially), not having the power point and paper coincide. I took that as one of my many learnings from this session. I want to explore this further - to integrate these learnings into my life and to bring them to my patients and families in ways that might benefit them on their journey.
- *Third best part of the conference. These two used excellent theological integration. They used terms like "your concept of God" and "denominations." Imagine that???*
- **What an enlightening presentation.**
- **Extremely interesting.** It would be very interesting if a study was performed to see the effects of this approach in health care. Lots of questions about the hospital and how people are treated there for free. Do all the people that work there volunteer? Is it funded some way? Loved this talk. **Truly, if the mind is at ease, the body can be.**
- *Excellent and very interesting and informative presentation. Opened a very new perspective for me. Very enjoyable.*
- The cultural information was most helpful.
- **My favorite session.** *We are very Christian oriented, but I feel that we need to be very sensitive to other beliefs. I also believe that the holistic approach to healing is far more effective than just the medical aspect. This seminar was especially helpful and enlightening.*
- **Good Material. It was interesting to learn about their SAI counseling.**
- *Wonderfully sensitive and knowledgeable presenters from a unique cultural/spiritual perspective. It is always helpful to hear from those*

*outside our typical American/Christian religious traditions. **We can learn much from what they are doing at their hospital in India.***

- Thank you! At last, the mind, body and spirit approach I believe in. It was very practical information that didn't have to be cloaked in Christianity. I loved the comment they made, "Let's open our minds". **PS I love Sai Baba!**
- *I really appreciated knowing this special practice in a different culture and its impacts on the people.*
- **Very interesting philosophy, we need to do more health care like that!**
- *I appreciate that Umesh Rao provided his business card for follow-up. It would have been helpful to have his powerpoint presentation in the guidebook. He and Gita Umesh were able to convey the philosophy and importance of love and peace in providing this accessible care. **They were amazing, as is this facility and the teachings of Sai Baba.***
- **Great example of a refreshingly different model of spiritual care.**
- *I found this talk very helpful. It was well presented but I would so much have liked a hand out and/or contact information to further research this fascinating topic.*
- It was great to learn about this practice from a culture and tradition very different from our own, and also recognize the similarities.
- ***Their presence at the conference was a real gift to us. Their bringing a different way and culture in spirituality very valuable. My thanks to them.***
- This session was fascinating and worthwhile.