

# Merck Foundation and Manipal Academy of Higher Education signs MoU to Train Embryologists from Africa and Asia

*Merck Foundation connects Africa to India, to build the fertility care capacity in the African And Asian continents.*

MANIPAL, INDIA, May 3, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Merck Foundation](#), the philanthropic arm of Merck KGaA, Germany, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education, MAHE sign MoU to partner in providing embryology training program for Africa and Asia.

During the event Dr. Rasha Kelej stated that, “We are pleased to partner with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in India to provide hands-on practical training to develop embryologists’ platform in Africa and Asia to increase the number of standalone embryologists, and to improve the access to cost-effective fertility care in the developing countries, since the lack of trained and skilled health personnel is the main challenge in Africa and Asia.”

Merck Foundation in partnership with MAHE launched Merck Embryology Training Program, a certificate course in Assistive Reproduction and Embryology through its ‘Merck More Than a Mother’ campaign.

During the event, Prof. Poornima Baliga, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of MAHE said, “Merck Foundation is working for a noble cause, and we are excited about this partnership and hope for a long-term partnership with the Foundation.”

Prof. Pragna Rao, Dean, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal appreciated the efforts of Merck Foundation, “We are glad to be a part of



Dr. Satish Adiga, Prof. Satish Adiga, HOD- Department of Clinical Embryology at Kasturba Medical College, Prof. Poornima Baliga, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of MAHE, Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation, and Prof. Pragna Rao, Dean, Kasturba Medical College



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this wonderful initiative of Merck Foundation. We appreciate the Merck Foundation's efforts to break the infertility stigma and to build fertility care capacity in Africa and developing countries.” The program aims to bridge the deficit of highly skilled Embryologists in Africa and part of Asia to match the ever-rising demand for fertility care in these countries. “The training program will shoulder the responsibility of fine-tuning and honing the delicate skills of the embryologists in IVF Centres, and emphasize the importance of ethics while handling human sperm, eggs and embryos”, said Prof Satish Adiga who is heading the training program.

Merck Foundation is planning to progressively scale-up to more African and Asian countries in addition to other developing countries. Through the clear benefits demonstrated of improving healthcare capacities, cultural shift to destigmatize infertility, the Merck More Than a Mother has sustained active participation in the different countries since 2015.

About 'Merck More Than a Mother' campaign; In many Cultures, childless women suffer discrimination, stigma, and ostracism. Their inability to have children results in great isolation, disinheritance, and assaults. “Merck More Than a Mother” empowers such women through the access to information, health, change of mindsets and economic empowerment.

Merck Foundation provided for more than 50 candidates, three months to six months clinical and practical training for fertility specialists and embryologists in more than 17 countries across Africa and Asia.

Merck Foundation is making history in many African countries where they never had fertility specialists or specialized fertility clinics before 'Merck More Than a Mother' intervention, to train the first fertility specialists such as; in Sierra Leone, Liberia, The Gambia, Niger, Chad, and Guinea.

Merck Foundation plan supported the establishment of the first public IVF centers in Ethiopia and Uganda through providing the clinical and practical training necessary for their staff. Merck Foundation also plans to support the establishment of the first public IVF in Tanzania soon.

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Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation signing the MOU with Manipal Academy of Higher Education in presence of Prof. Poornima Baliga, the Pro VC of MAHE, Prof. Pragna Rao, Dean, Kasturba Medical College, and Prof. Satish Adiga, Kasturba Medical College

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