



This award was instituted in 1988 in accordance with the will of Major General Saheb Singh Sokhey and is granted to a scientist for his/her outstanding contributions in the field of Communicable Diseases, significantly adding to the existing knowledge in the field.

The award for 2006 is being presented to Dr. Sasirekha Ramani, Senior Research Fellow, The Wellcome Trust Research Laboratory, Department of

Gastrointestinal Sciences, Christian Medical College, Vellore for her research work on “Rotavirus infection”.

Dr. Sasirekha’s studies have provided valuable insights into rotavirus infection in neonates and in hospitalized children. The studies have shown that rotaviral infections in neonates are not always or predominantly asymptomatic and do not appear to have a predilection for premature infants as has been believed in the past. A new genotype, G12 has emerged as an important cause of infection in children during surveillance. The data from Dr. Sasirekha’s study has reinforced the necessity to include a strain surveillance component for monitoring/detecting the circulating/emerging strains and to ensure that vaccination strategies keep up with the epidemiologic profile of rotaviruses. Her studies also form the basis to determine potential interventions for boosting innate and acquired immunity in enteric infections, particularly significant in developing countries where the immune response of children to vaccines is frequently impaired.