Christian Medical College Vellore



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And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

11th International Cell and Gene Therapy Conference



Bringing cell and gene therapy within reach

At the 11th International Cell and Gene Therapy Conference, CMC Vellore brought together the people investigating disease and those working to turn that knowledge into treatments available to more patients. By 2010, years of treatment had failed to control Bill Ludwig's leukaemia. At the University of Pennsylvania, he entered a trial in which his own immune cells were genetically altered to recognise and attack the cancer, leading to a remission that lasted more than a decade. His experience helped establish the promise of CAR-T therapy: a medicine made from a patient's own living cells. Sixteen years later, that milestone anchored a wider conversation in Vellore. Prof. Bruce Levine, a member of the Penn team behind the therapy, joined Indian and international scientists, clinicians, industry representatives and students at the 11th International Cell and Gene Therapy Conference on 9th and 10th October 2026. Held at Christian Medical College Vellore and organised by the Centre for Stem Cell Research (CSCR), a unit of BRIC-inStem, Bengaluru, the meeting centred on a question that follows every medical breakthrough: how can more patients benefit from it? Across two days of parallel sessions, discussions connected fundamental questions—why an insulin-producing cell falters, why heart muscle contracts abnormally, or why patients respond differently to genetic therapies, with clinical care, reliable manufacturing and equitable access.

125 Years of CMC Vellore
1900-2025



DID YOU KNOW?

The Rachel Fillebrown Nurses' Hostel, built in 1922, was made possible by a remarkable wedding gift! Rachel's parents, Mr Herbert Martin and Mrs Lora Fillebrown, donated the entire US$10,000 received as wedding gifts for their daughter towards its construction. Interestingly, from 1928 to 1932, this hostel also housed women medical students, before they moved to their own hostel at Bagayam.

Though demolished in 1998 to make way for the Ida Sophia Scudder Centenary Centre for Women and Children, the hostel remains an important part of CMC Vellore's institutional history.

Why basic science matters to patients: In his inaugural address, Chief Guest Prof. Padmanabhan Balaram, former Director of the Indian Institute of Science, offered a historical perspective on the value of research whose immediate clinical application may not yet be apparent. He recalled how Linus Pauling and colleagues demonstrated that haemoglobin differs chemically in people with sickle cell disease, establishing that human illness can have a molecular basis. Progress towards altering genes or growing specialised human cells, Balaram noted, rests on knowledge accumulated across chemistry, biology and medicine, reminding researchers that developing new treatments requires room for fundamental inquiry alongside careful clinical testing in patients.

Improving living medicines for cancer: Levine's keynote traced the evolution of CAR-T cells, which are equipped with a new receptor to help them recognise cancer. Because tumours can suppress immune activity and engineered cells can lose their ability to keep fighting, simply recognising cancer is not always enough. Addressing these hurdles is shaping the next generation of living medicines, such as Penn's experimental CAR-T therapy designed to release interleukin-18, a signal that recruits and strengthens the immune response. In an early-stage study of 21 patients with difficult-to-treat lymphoma, 52% achieved complete remission at assessment, an encouraging example of how immune cell communication can guide therapy design, though further study is needed. Levine also linked biology to the practical realities of manufacturing. Penn reported shortening the cell manufacturing process for this experimental therapy to three days, down from the standard nine days, though collection, testing and infusion preparation still add to total treatment time. Researchers are also investigating ways to programme immune cells directly inside the body to eventually reduce the need to manufacture individual cell products for each patient. Other oncology sessions explored extending cellular therapies beyond blood cancers. Speakers examined donor-derived T cells and natural killer cells that could be prepared in advance, while also addressing post-infusion complications and the need to verify how well and how long engineered cells function safely in patients.

Repairing genetic faults and following patients over time: Keynote speaker Prof. Christine Noel Duncan of Harvard Medical School highlighted the importance of early intervention and long-term vigilance through cerebral adrenoleukodystrophy, a disorder of the brain's white matter. A faulty ABCD1 gene disrupts fat processing, leading to inflammation, damage to the protective myelin covering nerve fibres, and progressive neurological decline. Adding a working ABCD1 gene to a patient's own blood-forming stem cells aims to halt brain disease before irreversible damage occurs. However, Duncan emphasised that early benefit does not end the need for lifelong surveillance: because added genetic material can insert near genes regulating cell growth and blood cancers have occurred in some recipients, genetic findings must be monitored alongside blood cell changes and overall patient health over time. CMC and CSCR's haemophilia A programme provided a local example of such sustained clinical follow-up. Using gene-modified blood-forming stem cells to provide a continuous source of clotting factor VIII, an initial study in five adults reported sustained factor production and no bleeding episodes over nine to 27 months, with Prof. Aby Abraham reporting maintained factor levels at roughly three years of follow-up. Extending this work to other inherited blood disorders, Dr. Senthil Bhoopalan outlined preparations for a first-in-human trial supplying a functional RPS19 gene to stem cells for Diamond-Blackfan anaemia, while other CSCR talks explored gene editing for severe congenital neutropenia and more targeted ways to condition bone marrow before transplantation.

Different diseases require different solutions: In sessions on diabetes, Prof. Rohit Kulkarni examined restoring insulin-producing pancreatic beta cells either by replacing them with stem-cell-derived cells or by stimulating surviving cells to regenerate, approaches that must balance immune rejection, the autoimmune attack seen in type 1 diabetes, and the risk of unwanted cell growth. Complementing this, Dr. Nikhil Gandasi used imaging to study how insulin-containing packages fail to release their contents at the cell surface in type 2 diabetes, while Dr. Gopalakrishnan Loganathan described isolating islets from a pancreas removed for chronic pancreatitis and returning them to the same patient to preserve insulin production.

For inherited heart disease, Prof. John Carter Ralphe described growing reprogrammed human cells into three-dimensional heart tissue to study how specific mutations in hypertrophic cardiomyopathy alter muscle contraction and drug responses. Dr. Minhaj Sirajuddin provided a complementary view of how muscle fibres and their contractile units organise and develop, while Dr. Sanjay Kumar addressed ways to help transplanted cells survive the hostile environment of an injured heart. Ophthalmology sessions spanned both the retina and the cornea. Because the gene implicated in Stargardt disease is too large for a single standard viral carrier, Dr. Arkasubhra Ghosh presented a two-carrier approach that improved gene function in preclinical models. Dr. Indumathi Mariappan used patient-derived retinal models to test genetic correction, and Dr. Deepika Parameswarappa discussed clinical experience showing how disease stage and remaining viable tissue influence retinal gene therapy outcomes.

For cloudy, scarred corneas at the front of the eye, Dr. Vivek Singh described combining stem cells with a supportive gel to aid tissue repair. Across rare metabolic, neurological and skin disorders, talks underscored why precise molecular diagnosis and tailored care matter. Addressing enzyme deficiencies such as mucopolysaccharidoses and Gaucher disease, Dr. Ashwin Dalal discussed laboratory studies to determine whether uncertain genetic variants truly impair function, while Dr. Sumita Danda emphasised individualised care for Gaucher patients whose clinical needs differ despite similar genetics. Prof. Julien Baruteau explored gene-based treatments for inherited liver disorders, and Dr. Ullas Kolthur Seetharaman examined how normal glucose regulation during feeding and fasting reveals where metabolism goes wrong. Additional sessions covered genetic treatments targeting the root mechanisms of childhood epilepsy, improved gene delivery to muscle, and combined genetic, cellular and anti-inflammatory approaches for the fragile, blistering skin disorder epidermolysis bullosa.

Delivering treatments and modelling disease: Reaching the right cells safely was a central focus of the delivery sessions. Using tiny lipid particles to carry RNA instructions, Dr. Srinivasa Reddy Bonam presented an experimental mRNA vaccine tested in breast cancer models, Dr. Kiran R. Gore examined chemical tweaks to improve gene-silencing RNA molecules, and CSCR's Dr. Marepally Srujan Kumar delivered RNA encoding the protein RBM3 to study muscle cell growth and metabolism. Dr. Prakriti Tayalia discussed biomaterial systems designed to programme immune cells inside the body, while Dr. Suresh Mathivanan explored extracellular vesicles-natural cell-to-cell packages that cancer cells can exploit, but which may also be adapted to carry therapies. Laboratory models offered another vital bridge between basic discovery and patient care. Using organoids and stem-cell models that reproduce key features of human tissue in a dish, Dr. Sasirekha Ramani investigated intestinal infections and why oral vaccines perform differently across populations. Presentations by Dr. Ruchi Tandon and CSCR researchers applied similar models to liver, intestinal, blood, brain and skin disorders, helping identify which disease mechanisms matter when patient tissue is scarce.

Making progress available to more people

Industry and clinical speakers connected laboratory advances with the practical demands of consistent manufacturing, regulatory pathways and equitable access. Discussions covered local production of key materials, enclosed and automated systems to reduce contamination, quality testing, and clinical updates across CAR-T, stromal cell and retinal cell therapies. Highlighting access and affordability, Prof. Biju George reviewed expanding donor and transplant options for patients, while Dr. Debojyoti Chakraborty described efforts to develop gene editing in India and simplify cell engineering for hospital settings. Student talks and posters, spanning corneal repair, diabetic wounds, skin gene delivery and cancer immunotherapy, brought younger researchers into the same clinical conversation. For the wider CMC community, the conference underscored that cell and gene therapy relies not only on laboratories, but on diagnostic services, doctors, nurses, manufacturing staff and teams supporting families through long-term follow-up. Just as Bill Ludwig's remission showed what years of research could achieve for one person, the discussions in Vellore focused on making such breakthroughs safer, more reliable and accessible to many more patients.

The relevant links are provided below

- Watch the Chief Guest's inaugural spech: https://youtu.be/p4LveIGhNOY?si=8JbHVfuC4TscAuHQ
- Conference souvenir and abstract book - Abstract Book - Final version
- Conference photos - https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Smw9bJEmEVVs4eP-6ttHe9XYSfRsdbB8?usp=sharing











The Departments of Ophthalmology and Continuing Medical Education organised a CME on Retinal Diseases

The Departments of Ophthalmology and Continuing Medical Education organised a CME on Retinal Diseases on 24th October, 2026. The programme was moderated by Dr. Smitha Jasper, Professor and Head, Department of Ophthalmology Unit-III. The speakers, Dr. Sheeja Susan John, Dr. Deepa Jose, Dr. Anupriya Arthur, Dr. Bharath Kumar, Dr. Susan Daniel, Dr. Doris Benita, Dr. Gopika R. Nair, and Dr. Suganthi Christella from the Department of Ophthalmology, and Dr. Thomas Kuriakose, Academic Director and Senior Consultant, Giridhar Eye Institute, Kochi discussed diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema, proliferative diabetic retinopathy, age-related macular degeneration, retinal vascular occlusion, ocular inflammatory disease, retinoblastoma, hereditary retinal dystrophies. The programme was attended by over 150 participants from 13 states and several departments in CMC. The CME Department thanks Dr. Sheeja Susan John, Professor and Head, Department of Ophthalmology, Dr. Smitha Jasper, the speakers, and the Telemedicine Department for making the CME possible.

Third Phase Curriculum Implementation Support Programme (CISP III) Workshop

The Department of Medical Education conducted its Third Phase Curriculum Implementation Support Programme (CISP III) for Deans/ MEU Coordinators/CC Members / MEU Resource persons for affiliated medical colleges on 15th – 16th October 2026. The National Medical Commission (NMC) has implemented the Competency Based Medical Education curriculum for the medical student from 2019. This workshop has been initiated by NMC to sensitise the clinical faculties Phase III on the changes made in the medical curriculum.

The workshop helped the members understand the framework of implementing aligned and integrated curriculum across all three phases, concepts of electives, purpose of early clinical exposure, AETCOM module, training methods mentioned in the GMER, student doctor methods of clinical teaching, competency acquisition in skills training, principles of assessment, ways to draft teaching and assessment schedule, importance of record maintenance and curricular Governance.

Dr. Margaret Shanthi started the day with prayer and meditation. The sessions were facilitated by the curriculum committee members from various departments in CMC Vellore who made it informative with active participation. At the end of the two-day workshop Dr. Prakash S.S. proposed the vote of thanks.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Margaret Shanthi F.X., Dr. Vinay Oommen., Dr. Vandana Kamath, Dr. Prakash S.S., Dr. Deepak V., Dr. Rajat Raghunath, Dr. Divya Elizabeth Muliyil, Dr. Latif J., Dr. Audrin L., Dr. Premila M. Wilfred for imparting their knowledge to the participants.



Special Prayers: November 1 - 7, 2026

Rural Unit for Health and Social Affairs (RUHSA) **:** Dr. Biswajit Paul and Staff

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery **:** Dr. Jonathan Victor and Staff
Dr. Komala Abhishek Reddy and Staff
Mrs. Sasikala Umesh and Staff

International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention
Council Members : Dr. Spurgeon Rachaprolu
Dr. Philip Thomas

Hospital : Bangalore Baptist Hospital Society.



Welcome

- **Dr. Padma Paul,** Sr. Surgeon, Department of Ophthalmology, on her return from sabbatical leave.

Memoranda

- **Dr. Sundeep M.C. Kisku,** Professor, is appointed as Head, Department of Paediatric Surgery with effect from 29th October 2026 for a four-year term.
- **Dr. Amit Kumar Dutta,** Professor, is appointed as Head, Department of Medical Gastroenterology & Medical Gastroenterology Unit-II with effect from 1st November 2026 for a four-year term.
- **Dr. Joseph A.J.,** Professor, is appointed as Head, Medical Gastroenterology Unit-I with effect from 1st November 2026 for a four-year term.
- **Dr. Ajit Sebastian,** Professor, is appointed as Acting Head, Department of Gynaecologic Oncology with effect from 2nd November 2026 till 12th July 2027.

Laurels and Recognitions

- **Dr. Ajit Sebastian**, Professor and Acting Head, Department of Gynaecologic Oncology was awarded First Prize for Podium Presentation titled "Role of lymphadenectomy in Interval cytoreductive surgery for ovarian carcinoma - Randomised control trail - A 5-year RCT under Surgical Faculty category in the 16th Annual Research Day held between 5th & 6th October, 2026.
- **Dr. Amritha Madhukumar,** 2nd Year M.Ch Resident and **Dr. Akshay Kumar,** 1st year M.Ch Resident in Gynae Oncology won third prize for Super - Specialty Quiz at 15th AOGIN India National Conference 2026, Kozhikode, Kerala held between 18th September-20th September, 2026.
- **Dr. Lekshmi S.A.,** 3rd Year M.Ch Resident won the following awards at the Conference of Kerala State Chapter of Association of Gynaecologic Oncologists of India - KAGOCON 2026 organised by KLSC AGOI, held at IMA house, Kochi between 10th and 11th October, 2026.- **Winner** of "Young Minds. Bold Ideas"; Future Breakthrough Competition and **third prize** in the "Single Focus Rule Competition"
- The World Congress of Gastroenterology (WCOG 2026) was held from 30th September to 3rd October 2026 at New Delhi, India. **Dr. Ashish Goel,** Professor & Head, Department of Hepatology was elected as a Member, Governing Council, Indian National Association for Study of the Liver (INASL). In addition, the following faculty and postgraduates from the Departments of Gastroenterology and Hepatology were awarded the following prizes.

Type of award & prize	Name of the Faculty
1st in Young Investigator (Liver) award	**Dr. Amith Viswanath** (DM Gastroenterology, Batch of 2020, CMC Vellore)
2nd Prize in Endoscopy Video Digest session	**Dr. Likithesh D.S.,** Assistant Professor, Department of Gastroenterology, CMC Vellore
1st Prize for Best Free paper Oral presentation 1 – Pancreas Session	**Dr. Nidhi Arora,** Senior Registrar (Batch of 2023). Department of Gastroenterology, CMC Vellore

Obituaries



- Demise of **Mr. Karthik Raja B, Hospital** Attendant Grade III, Medical Ward, on 23rd October 2026. He had served the institution for 18 years. Let us uphold his wife, Mrs. Saridha (Homemaker); his elder son, Mr. Bharath (III Year B.Sc. Radiology student); his younger son, Mr. Sarath (Class XII); and all the bereaved members of the family in our prayers.

- Demise of **Mr. T. Selvin Devasahayam,** Retired Scientist, father of Dr. Satheesh Solomon T. Selvin, (Professor of Ophthalmology and Vice Principal, AHS) on 25th October, 2026. Let us uphold his wife Mrs. Sunitha, Dr. Satheesh Solomon and all the bereaved members of the family in our prayers.

Situations Vacant

Click the following link to view the vacancies
https://clin.cmcvellore.ac.in/cmcapp/listapplication.aspx

Vacancies under the Principal's Office - for queries, contact the mentioned office

1. Senior Resident with **M.D. / DNB (Family Medicine)** for the **Department of Low Cost Effective Care Unit (Family Medicine)**

Candidates with DNB qualification should fulfill the latest NMC criteria for teaching appointment.

Salary : As per institutional rules.

Accommodation : Provided (Partly Furnished Depending on availability).

Applications must be submitted through the online application system.

Please log on to **https://clin.cmcvellore.ac.in/cmcapp/listapplication.aspx**

Note: Only online applications will be accepted; Hard copies will not be accepted.

Applications will close on **November 14, 2026.**

2. Demonstrator (NM) (Term Post) with **M.Sc. (Biostatistics) / M.Sc., (Statistics)** for the **Department of Biostatistics**

Job Description : Teach biostatistics classes for M.Sc., Biostatistics, AHS and Nursing students on introductory biostatistics topics including, probability, inferential statistics and correlation and regression. Provide statistical guidance and data analysis support to students undertaking research theses.

Salary Scale : As per institutional rules.

Accommodation : Not Provided.

Applications must be submitted through the online application system.

Please log on to **https://clin.cmcvellore.ac.in/cmcapp/listapplication.aspx**

Note: Only online applications will be accepted; Hard copies will not be accepted.

Applications will close on **November 14, 2026.**

Vacancies under the office of Medical Superintendent-for queries contact the mentioned office

3. Staff III Radiographer for the **Department of Radiodiagnosis**

Qualifications : H.Sc., with two years CMAI Diploma in Radiodiagnosis Technology / B.Sc., in Radiology & Imaging Technology recognized by the TN Dr. MGR Medical University. and those who have fours years experience as Jr. Radiographer (Term Appointment) or equivalent only need to apply.

Note : Only Regular mode will be accepted, Private or correspondence will be not accepted.

Salary Scale : As per institutional rules. **Age Limit :** 35 years.

Applications must be submitted through the online application system.
Please log on to **https://clin.cmcvellore.ac.in/cmcapp/listapplication.aspx**
Note: Only online applications will be accepted; Hard copies and emails will not be accepted.
Applications will close on **November 09, 2026.**

4. Jr. Critical Care Therapist (Term Appointment) for the **Department of Cardiac Anaesthesia**
Qualification : B.Sc., Critical Care Technology from any recognised University or Diploma in Critical Care Therapy obtained from CMC Hospital (H.Sc., with Two Year Diploma with one year internship).
Job Description : To work in Cardiothoracic ICU.
Consolidated Pay : As per institutional rules.
Age Limit : Below 30 years.
Note : Only Regular mode will be accepted, Private or correspondence will be not accepted.
Applications must be submitted through the online application system.
Please log on to **https://clin.cmcvellore.ac.in/cmcapp/listapplication.aspx**
Note: Only online applications will be accepted; Hard copies and emails will not be accepted.
Applications will close on **November 16, 2026.**

Others

5. Principal In-charge, *Sparkling Stars Crèche, Playgroup & Pre-KG* CMC Vellore – Ranipet Residential Quarters

Applications are invited from **female candidates** holding a +2 / Degree with TTC, Montessori, or B.Ed qualification. Candidates must have hands-on experience managing a crèche, playgroup, or pre-KG, with strong English communication and computer skills.

Candidates should be organised and capable of supervising staff, maintaining safety and hygiene standards, handling day-to-day administration, and engaging effectively with parents. A sound understanding of early childhood development and age-appropriate learning is essential.

Preference will be given to candidates residing near CMC Ranipet Hospital.

Send your CV and certificates via email to the address below.
Email: **ranipetcreche@gmail.com**
Last date : November 14, 2026.

6. Schiefflin Institute of Health - Research & Leprosy Centre, Karigiri invites applications for the following post:
Tutor / Radiographer - Department of Surgery
Qualification & Experience : B.Sc. Radiography Imaging Technology , preferably with two years of experience.

Email your bio-data and scanned copies of certificates to **directorate@karigiri.org** and **personnel@karigiri.org**

Last date for receipt of applications : November 07, 2026.