

Utah State Welcomes Dr. Rohit Ravi to Study Newborn Hearing Screening

01/25/2023



Dr. Rohit Ravi, assistant professor at Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore, will spend 12 months at USU.

The National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) will host Dr. Rohit Ravi from Kasturba Medical College in Mangalore, India for a 12-month Fulbright-Nehru Post-Doctoral Fellowship. Funded by the United States-India Educational Foundation, Fulbright-Nehru fellowships provide opportunities for talented Indian faculty and researchers to strengthen their research capacities.

"These are very competitive fellowships," said Dr. Karl White, NCHAM Director. "We feel fortunate to have Dr. Ravi with us."

Ravi received bachelor's and master's degrees in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, where he also pursued his doctorate. He is an assistant professor in the department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore, and worked as a pediatric audiologist prior to the start of his fellowship.

Now, Ravi is focusing on learning about Early Hearing Detection and Management of Hearing Impairment (EHDI) programs in the United States, which are instrumental in identifying and addressing hearing loss in infants. "Hearing loss, if not identified early and provided appropriate intervention, could lead to a long-standing effect on speech, language, and cognitive and psychosocial

development," said Ravi. "Newborn hearing screening is important to ensure that children are diagnosed at the right age."

In the U.S., a Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS) program has been established and successfully running for several decades, leading to many infants with hearing loss receiving a diagnosis and enrollment in an appropriate intervention program by as early as 3 months of age.

Ravi hopes to learn more about how EHDI programs operate in different states with the ultimate goal of establishing a national-level UNHS program in India. "In India, the reported age of identification of hearing loss is above five years," he said. "Such a late identification deprives the child of critical years for language development. I hope that this step towards early hearing detection and intervention will help to reduce the long-term burden caused by hearing impairment on the family and society."

During his time with NCHAM, Ravi will be able to learn from and contribute to projects focused on collecting data about the effectiveness of EHDI programs, developing training and technical assistance materials, creating databases to store information, and developing policy initiatives to improve newborn hearing screening programs. Additionally, Ravi will be able to attend the annual National EHDI Conference to present his work and network with individuals involved in EHDI programs all over the states.

Though Ravi is only in the first half of his fellowship, he is excited for the opportunities ahead of him. "The experience I have gained so far has been so enriching," he said. "I am looking forward to the rest."