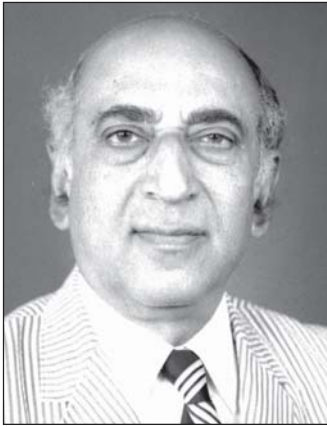


Obituary

H. D. Tandon

(7 October 1924–10 November 2009)



Harcharan Das Tandon, born in 1924, completed his BSc at Agra University and pursued a career in Medicine at Agra Medical College, one of the best institutions in northern India at that time. Young Dr H. D. Tandon decided to get trained as a specialist in the field of Pathology in the same institution. After obtaining his MD degree, he went to train at the Cornell University Medical School in New York, USA, on completion of which he

received the American Board certificate in Anatomic Pathology.

A few years after returning to India, Dr Tandon joined in 1959 the then newly established, prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi as a senior faculty member in the Department of Pathology. He was fondly called 'Harry' by his colleagues and friends. Professor Tandon served at AIIMS for 26 years. During this period he successively held the positions of Professor of Pathology, Head of the Department of Pathology, Chief of the Institute–Rotary Cancer Hospital and finally for the last 4 years, Director of AIIMS. On retirement from service he was invited to head the Department of Histopathology at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, a position he held for 12 years. After giving up active professional work, Professor Tandon went to Auckland, New Zealand to live with his son and family till his last day, 10 November 2009.

Professor Tandon's professional life is an example of glorious achievements. He was at the same time a high level diagnostic

pathologist, a reputed biomedical researcher and scientist, and a progressive medical educationist. Acting as a pioneer in modern scientific pathology, he established the standards of a good international quality diagnostic pathology laboratory at AIIMS that served as a model for other medical colleges of India. Professor Tandon initiated several programmes in the teaching of Pathology and Clinical Pathology to undergraduate and graduate students. He was one of the first to introduce multiple choice questions for assessment of learning of medical students. His investigative work in human health spanned from intestinal ulceroinflammatory diseases, through atherosclerosis and pulmonary diseases to some of the important acute and chronic toxic hepatopathies. For major and important contributions in these areas, Professor Tandon was bestowed with several laurels which included Fellowships of the Royal College of Pathologists of the UK, the Indian National Science Academy and the National Academy of Medical Sciences; several World Health Organization expert assignments and many awards from national scientific and other organizations. As an eminent medical educationist, his reputation spread globally through several of his students who have acquired prestigious positions in well recognized medical institutions in India and abroad.

As an administrator, Professor Tandon strictly followed the path of discipline and honesty while being kind and soft-hearted. He believed in doing the right thing at the right time in the right place. As a person, his considerate attitude, sense of humour and wealth of general and professional knowledge made him extremely likeable and won him many friends among seniors, colleagues and juniors alike. Professor Tandon's passing away has left a void that cannot be filled. He kindled a beacon that will give hope and inspiration to many for a long, long time.

N. C. NAYAK

*Department of Histopathology
Sir Ganga Ram Hospital
New Rajinder Nagar
New Delhi*

Obituaries

Many doctors in India practise medicine in difficult areas under trying circumstances and resist the attraction of better prospects in other countries. They die without their contributions to our country being acknowledged.

The National Medical Journal of India wishes to recognize the efforts of these doctors. We invite short accounts of the life and work of a recently deceased colleague by a friend, student or relative. The account in about 500 to 1000 words should describe his or her education and training and highlight the achievements as well as disappointments. A photograph should accompany the obituary.

—Editor