

Obituaries

Indar Kumar Dhawan

(22 June 1930–4 June 2021)



With the passing away of Professor Indar Kumar Dhawan, popularly known as IKD, the surgical fraternity and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi (AIIMS) family has lost a renowned surgeon and a greatly admired human being. He belonged to a fast dwindling number of general surgeons, who could with great skill and expertise do almost any type of surgery. His field of expertise ranged from general

surgery, surgical oncology, renal transplant, plastic and reconstructive surgery, and craniofacial operations. His range of operative surgery was mind-boggling and what's more he excelled in all of them. He was a brilliant teacher, a great thinking mind, researcher and accomplished administrator, liked by one and all.

He was born in 1930 in Shimla to Dropdi Devi and Rai Bahadur Badri Lal Dhawan and was the fourth of nine siblings. His father worked for the Ministry of Defence. He was his mother's favourite with the nickname of Bhola, so true to his nature as an adult. It is said that persons born on 22 June (shared with Steve Jobs), under the sign of Cancer, are well known for great artistic abilities and a strong drive to succeed. They possess a stubborn streak, are dedicated perfectionists with a never-say-no attitude. How true for our IKD!

His early schooling was in Shimla and Delhi, followed by Intermediate at F.C. College in Lahore. They moved to Bombay as it was then called, during the Partition. He did his MBBS and MS (Surgery) from the famous Grant Medical College in Mumbai, winning numerous awards and gold medals. Not only was he a brilliant student, but was also a keen sportsman, excelling in football for his college.

After his Master of Surgery from Grant Medical College, he shifted to Delhi in 1958 and joined as a surgical registrar at Irwin Hospital, the largest and most prominent hospital of Delhi at that time. He worked with Dr K.C. Mahajan and Dr S.K. Sen, two top surgeons of that period and impressed them and others alike, with his hard work, sound clinical judgement and surgical skill. It was at the Irwin Hospital that he met his future wife, Dr Sushila Sarin, who had returned from the UK. They got married in 1961. Dr Sushila Dhawan later joined the faculty of Anaesthesiology at the AIIMS.

In 1961, he joined AIIMS as Assistant Professor in Surgery and was attached to Professor B.N.B. Rao's unit. His hard work, clinical judgement, surgical skill, interest in research, and teaching abilities, were rewarded by promotion to Associate Professor (present day Additional Professor) in 1970. He was also given independent charge of Surgical Unit II.

In 1966, he was awarded the senior commonwealth fellowship to the UK to train in the field of renal transplantation under the

legendary Sir Roy Calne. On returning back to the AIIMS, he put his heart and soul in starting a renal transplantation unit. Starting a new, technically demanding and multidisciplinary venture was a Herculean job. Working against many odds, his team succeeded in doing the first kidney transplant in northern India. What was even more impressive was that having successfully started transplant surgery at the AIIMS, he selected younger colleagues and sent them for training to the UK, so that kidney transplantation becomes an upgraded new specialty.

Dr Dhawan was a true general surgeon, excelling in different areas but by his own choice, he developed a keen interest in plastic and reconstructive surgery, largely to manage advanced head and neck cancers, the commonest cancer in our country. He developed different types of flaps, which are acknowledged in the book on flaps. Another area that was developed was a link up with dental surgery and ENT, for a joint approach to manage cleft lips and palate. He was also one of very few surgeons to do surgical corrections of cranial abnormalities in children.

Professor I.K. Dhawan was regarded as a very fine teacher, greatly admired by both undergraduates and postgraduates. He was the first Sub-Dean (Academics) of AIIMS, which gave him the opportunity to organize and streamline medical teaching.

In 1979, he was promoted as Professor of Surgery and became head of the Department of Surgery from 1982 till he retired in 1988. His wide-ranging expertise in different surgical fields brought him into the limelight in Indian and international societies. He was honoured with the presidency of the Delhi State Chapter of Surgery, Plastic Surgery Association of India and Indian Society of Oncology.

Professor Dhawan was a prolific writer and authored a *Textbook of Surgery* for undergraduate students. He published numerous scientific papers in various national and international journals.

Hard work and dedication brought about recognition and honours. These included the Sandoz Oration for Cancer Research by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and Fellowship of the National Academy of Sciences. He was also honoured by being appointed as Surgeon to the President of India. For a man of science, he was also a religious person in his own way, by being an active member of the Arya Samaj. He was lately working on writing a book on Gandhi Ji.

He was involved with surgical training in India and was closely associated with development of the National Board of Examinations. He was an examiner for undergraduate and postgraduate students in universities in India and for Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (Glasgow) in Abu Dhabi.

After superannuating from the AIIMS, he was appointed as consultant surgeon in Mafrq Hospital, Abu Dhabi from 1988 to 1996, and was Chairman of the Department of Surgery at that hospital during the same tenure.

After coming back to India from Abu Dhabi, he was appointed as Chairman of Surgery at Batra Hospital, New Delhi. He was also a coordinator for the Diplomate of the National Board programme at Batra Hospital. Simultaneously, he was Senior Surgical Consultant at Sitaram Bhartia Hospital, New Delhi. He continued to visit the surgical department at the AIIMS to interact with the faculty.

Professor IKD was undoubtedly one of the most popular and admired surgeons, and excelled as a teacher, researcher and organizer. But over and above, he was an exceptionally great human being, with love for all and malice for none. His passing away has left a huge void that will be difficult to fill.

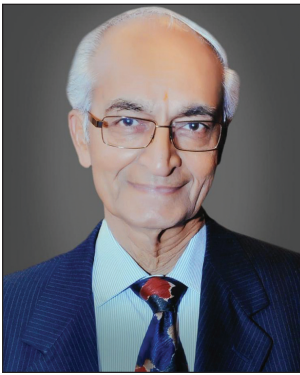
May God give well deserved Sadgati to his soul.

NARESH C. MADAN

*Formerly Department of Surgery
All India Institute of Medical Sciences
New Delhi, India*

Madan Mohan

(14 May 1929–7 June 2021)



Professor Madan Mohan was born at Mardan (North West Frontier Province; NWFP) on 14 May 1929 into a family of doctors. His father was a leading Physician-cum-Eye Surgeon running a 50-bedded eye hospital. His grandfather and both uncles were also doctors, practising at Bannu (NWFP), in present-day Pakistan. He started his schooling at Lahore and Rawalpindi, and completed his medical education at King

George's Medical College (KGMC), Lucknow, where he received many academic and sports prizes and was also declared the best student and sportsman of the college. He did his Master of Surgery in Ophthalmology and residency training and joined the faculty of KGMC. Subsequently, he joined the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in 1960 and served in various academic capacities. Dr Madan Mohan was selected as a Rockefeller Fellow to study corneal transplantation and eye banking in the UK, France and USA in 1963–64. He established the National Eye Bank and Cornea Unit at AIIMS and subsequently took over the reins of the Dr R.P. Centre of Ophthalmic Sciences as its Chief from 1979 to 1989. He trained many Ophthalmologists from all over India in this specialty. After superannuation from AIIMS, he became the Founder-Chairman of the MM Eyetech Institute. The other positions of eminence held by him include Honorary Surgeon to the President of India, and Advisor in Ophthalmology to the Government of India (1980–91). For his excellent services in the field of healthcare, he was awarded the Padma Shri in 1985.

Professor Madan Mohan was an eminent ophthalmic surgeon who made important contributions to ophthalmic research. He was responsible for the development of sub-specialties of ophthalmology especially corneal surgery and community ophthalmology. His special interest in basic and applied research of blinding disorders was particularly relevant to developing countries. His contributions in the field of corneal diseases and eye banking, uveitis, cataract and myopia won him many distinctions and awards. His research in the epidemiology of blinding diseases such as cataract and national surveys on vitamin A deficiency and trachoma helped enormously in the implementation of the National Programme for the Control of Blindness (NPCB).

He was the recipient of many meritorious awards including

the coveted Adenwala Oration Gold Medal (of the All India Ophthalmologic Society), the Dr M.P. Mehrey Award by the Uttar Pradesh government, the O.P. Bhasin Award (Science and Technology), and Distinguished Services and Research in Intraocular Lens (IOL) implants by the Asia Pacific IOL Society. He was conferred the distinguished services award by the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (1981) and by the International Eye Bank, Washington, USA (1966). Dr Madan Mohan was also honoured with the Lifetime Achievement award by the All India Ophthalmological Society (AIOS, 2000), Delhi Ophthalmic Society, Cornea Society of India (2013), Indian Society of Corneal and Keratorefractive Surgeons (ISCKRS) in 2018, and the AIIMS, New Delhi in 2020.

He delivered many guest lectures and orations at national and international conferences. During his tenure at the AIIMS, New Delhi, he contributed over 150 scientific papers in national and international journals.

I had the honour of being trained by him. He was great as a mentor and thesis guide, always encouraging. I remember this particular instance, in my third semester, where Dr Madan Mohan was operating on a patient that needed a preparatory trabeculectomy prior to keratoplasty. He quietly asked me to sit at the microscope and thus I did my first trabeculectomy and keratoplasty, which came as a surprise to me. His mentorship was unparalleled, as he always instilled confidence in his mentees. He also recommended my name for a senior fellowship at Washington DC, USA, which I followed through, and this fellowship till date stays as a feather in my cap. I do owe a lot to Dr Madan Mohan. Spending time with Dr Mohan in his OPD spoke volumes about his character. He was a thorough gentleman, always soft-spoken, extremely patient, in addition to his impeccable demeanour. Inside the operating room, he had a cool temperament coupled with his surgical excellence.

Dr Madan Mohan made immense contributions to postgraduate training and the development of sub-specialties in Ophthalmology. He started the Ophthalmic Technician (BSc) (Hons) and Ophthalmic Assistant training programmes to meet the paramedical-ophthalmic human resource needs in the country, and also brought about many other innovations such as the District Blindness Control Societies for the NPCB. The blueprint of the Dr R.P. Centre was largely modified by him to encompass changes in modern ophthalmic training that he foresaw and the result is visible in the institution. He introduced microsurgery and IOL implantation, and laser surgery in the residency training programme and developed the concept of clinical ophthalmic laboratories.

As Advisor (Ophthalmology) to the Ministry of Health, Government of India (1980–1991), he steered the NPCB, streamlined and laid the standards for holding safe eye camps.

He was single-handedly responsible for getting 100%