

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.

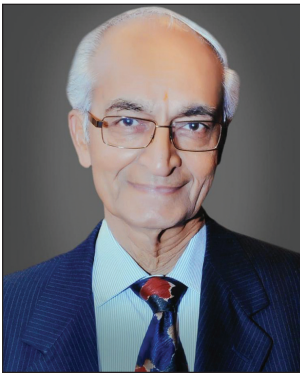
May God give well deserved Sadgati to his soul.

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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%

customs duty exemption on the import of 'sight-saving equipment' in 1988. This resulted in major inflows in modern technology and advances in clinical ophthalmology in the private sector.

Apart from being an excellent surgeon and clinician, Professor Madan Mohan contributed immensely to prevention of blindness, as the president of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness (PBL), India for 3 years and internationally, as a member of the Programme Advisory Group on PBL, WHO, for over a decade. He served the Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology as regional secretary and councillor.

He was till his demise, the Chairman and Senior Consultant at the MM Eyetech Institute in Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi,

practising Ophthalmology along with his son Dr Rishi Mohan and daughter-in-law Dr Indira Mohan.

Reminiscing Dr Madan Mohan brings to mind the words from Gandhiji,

'In a gentle way, you can shake the World.'

Dr Madan Mohan, with his kind, gentle demeanour, shook and changed the face of Indian Ophthalmology forever.

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Obituaries

Many doctors in India practise medicine in difficult areas under trying circumstances and resist the attraction of better prospects in western countries and elsewhere. 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*