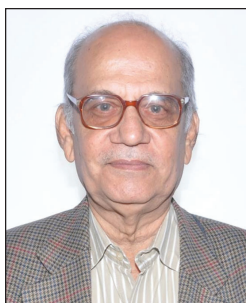


Dr Kamlakar Purshottam Deodhar
(19 February 1937–1 May 2025)



Professor Kamlakar Purshottam Deodhar, KPD Sir, as he was fondly called by his students, leaves behind enduring memories in the academic pathology landscape of India.

Hailing from the Konkan region of Maharashtra, Dr Deodhar joined the Seth GS Medical College and King Edward Memorial (KEM) hospital in 1955 for his MBBS and completed his MD in Pathology from the same institute, following which he worked there as lecturer and associate professor, and published several autopsy-related papers. His love for autopsies and fondness for KEM, where he was first introduced to them, persisted even after leaving that institution. From 1973–1974, he was a Commonwealth fellow at the Royal Free Hospital, London, under the renowned Dr Peter Scheur, with whom he published the original work on orcein staining of hepatitis B antigen in liver biopsies. The article was published in the *Journal of Clinical Pathology* in 1975. Coincidentally, 2025, the year of his passing, marks the 50th anniversary of this publication.

Dr Deodhar joined Lokmanya Tilak Medical College (LTMC) as Professor of Pathology in 1975, from where he retired as head of department in 1995. He mentored numerous students, was known for his teaching skills, and gained a reputation for his sharp clinico-pathologic acumen. He nurtured a lively academic atmosphere in the department. He encouraged his faculty to develop various pathology sub-specialties—a very forward concept for that era. He himself was a highly respected figure in hepatopathology. He firmly believed in the teaching powers of the autopsy room, and the daily noon autopsy meetings were sacrosanct. Neither the trainees nor the faculty were permitted to miss these meetings. Not only was he a wonderful postgraduate teacher, but his teaching sessions for the undergraduate students were equally engaging, and what he taught remained with you. He remained at heart a teacher, and perhaps that is how he would wish to be remembered. His contemporaries describe him as sensitive, kind, and soft-hearted, and as an academician, he had a curious mind. He was an MD examiner not only in Maharashtra, but also at AIIMS, New Delhi, and PGI, Chandigarh. He was regularly present at conferences. He organized the Indian Association of Pathologists and Microbiologists (IAPM) conference at Mumbai in 1989 and was President of IAPM in 1995. After retirement from LTMC, he worked for a few years at KJ Somaiya Medical College.

Beyond pathology, Dr Deodhar was an avid trekker, a keen bridge player, and had interests in literature, music, and astrology. He and his wife, the late Mrs Shanta Deodhar, were an endearing couple who often graciously hosted departmental get-togethers at their home during the mango season. In addition to his colleagues and students, Dr Deodhar was held in high esteem by the rest of the staff as well. Many of them, with tearful eyes, shared memories of his empathetic and humane approach during their difficult phases. As his MD student, I experienced his perceptive

nature, his ability to instill confidence, and his words of appreciation were very precious.

Dr KP Deodhar is survived by his sons, Dr Kedar Deodhar, who is a surgical pathologist and Dr Avinash Deodhar, who is a plastic surgeon.

Dr Deodhar touched the lives of many. Whenever I enter the pathology department at LTMC, my memory invariably drifts back over the years, and I can vividly picture Dr Deodhar walking down the corridor with his brisk stride, humming a tune under his breath, and his cheerful smile of acknowledgement. His memory will always be cherished, and he has secured his place in the thoughts and hearts of those who were privileged to have known him.

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MY MEMORIES OF PROFESSOR DEODHAR: KPD

KPD (as I always referred to him, given that he was my pathologist-father's contemporary and close friend, from 1955) was my first formal teacher in postgraduate pathology when I started my MD in 1988. (My father, of course, was the first informal teacher in that subject). My initiation to postgraduate pathology, not surprisingly, was in the autopsy room, which KPD referred to as the 'Temple of pathology'. Dr Chitra Madiwale has written above about his dedication to and passion for the autopsy as a teaching tool. If there were an award for 'pathologist most committed to autopsy', it would probably have ended in a draw, with KPD among the finalists—because there were other wonderful teachers and champions of the autopsy in the Bombay school of pathology. (I use the word *Bombay* advisedly. Unfortunately, in Mumbai now, autopsies are far less commonly done). But if there were an award for 'Most humble and unassuming pathologist, despite lofty credentials', KPD would have won the award hands down.

KPD was a popular and excellent teacher; his students from LTMC never let us, from other colleges, forget that their professor's paper was reference number 99 in the chapter on the Liver in our edition of *Robbins' Pathologic Basis of Disease*. KPD's high scruples (which led some to compare him with Ramshastri Prabhune, the model of integrity in the Peshwa's court in the 18th century) belied a wit that was subtle at times (I know—I was on the receiving end!), to positively droll at others.

His eyes had sparkling green-grey irises, which would light up when discussing something that gave him pleasure—a challenging diagnosis, a point to make during a talk, or humming a tune while walking in the college corridors and rhythmically tapping the walls (something he was probably not even aware of). Incredibly, one day after I wrote the previous line, an automated email from *A. word. a. day* landed

in my Inbox on 29th May, 2025, and informed me that the word for that day was 'devil's tattoo', which meant 'A rhythmic tapping of fingers, knuckles, or feet'. The quote offered as an example was 'They say an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Well, an idle hand does a devil's tattoo on any available surface, usually as a sign of impatience, agitation, or deep thought.' With KPD, it was always a matter of deep thought.

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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