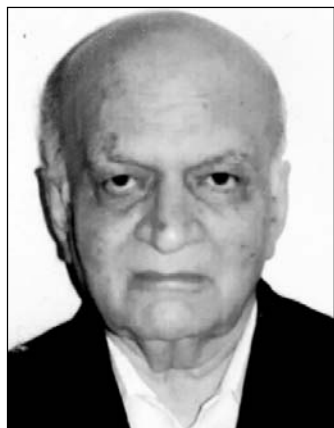


## Obituary

### J. C. N. Joshipura (23 July 1929–23 July 2010)



Dr J. C. N. Joshipura was born in Junagadh on 23 July 1929. His father worked in the Central Reserve Police, so Dr Joshipura had his schooling in Mount Abu and Ajmer. He topped his class each year and his name still appears on the school's roll of honour.

He joined Grant Medical College, Mumbai in 1947 and continued to win many scholarships and awards including the prestigious Gray

Medal in anatomy. He graduated in 1952, and was awarded the Central Government Gold Medal that enabled him to pursue medical studies in the United Kingdom. He obtained his FRCS (England), FRCS (Edinburgh) and MCh Orthopaedics (Liverpool).

Returning to India in 1958, he was appointed honorary assistant orthopaedic surgeon to the Grant Medical College and Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals. He taught undergraduate and postgraduate students till 1978.

He also served as consultant orthopaedic surgeon to Sir Hurkisondas Nurrotamdas Hospital, Dr Balabhai Nanavati Hospital and the Breach Candy Hospital. When Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre opened in 1973, he was appointed consultant orthopaedic surgeon and head of the department of orthopaedic surgery.

He was an examiner for the MS (Orthopaedics) in many Indian universities and also served as Editor of the *Indian Journal of Orthopaedics*.

During his working hours, Dr Joshipura was a scholar, an orthopaedic surgeon *par excellence*, a stern disciplinarian and an excellent teacher. But there was another side of his personality when he was off duty. He was a devoted family man. One had to watch him with his granddaughters to see how much he loved them.

In the company of his friends, Joe liked nothing better than to relax with a glass of wine and a table loaded with good food. He was a kind man, always willing to help his friends in any way he could.

Whenever we were together at the Willingdon Club, it always astonished me to see how many persons came to say hello to Joe. Not all of them were his patients; they were from all walks of life.

His untimely but peaceful death on his birthday was an irreparable loss for his family and friends.

R.I.P. Joe. We miss you!

GAJENDRA SINH  
*Department of Neurosurgery  
Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre  
Mumbai*

*Dr Gajendra Singh requested Dr Parvez Hakim, his student and later colleague in the orthopaedic department of Sir J.J. Group of*

*Hospitals to write his impressions of Dr Joshipura as an orthopaedic surgeon and as a teacher.*

It was in our senior term as medical students that a young consultant, impeccably attired in a suit, walked into the portals of the Grant Medical College, completely at ease with his surroundings. He was obviously 'England-returned' and soon became a familiar figure on the campus, in the wards and in the canteen.

The young Dr Joshipura kept himself aloof and students were in awe of him. He spoke softly but firmly and taught with confidence. Students who had benefited from his knowledge and teaching did well in examinations.

He was a strict disciplinarian, particularly with his students, postgraduates and nursing staff. Case notes and records of findings of investigations had to be well documented. He had a knack of detecting trumped-up data and did not hesitate to take the culprit to task.

Residents were allowed to operate only after he had satisfied himself on their knowledge and skill, the procedure to be performed and their ability to deal with unforeseen situations and complications. Those fortunate enough to train with him turned into skilled orthopaedic surgeons.

His surgical skills were outstanding. With a perfect knowledge of anatomy, he handled tissues gently and with respect. His junior colleagues and residents imbibed this perfection in dissection.

He was a man of few words, cordial with his colleagues but expansive with his friends. The trio of Dr Joshipura, Dr Gajendra Singh and Dr Noshir Wadia was often to be found discussing cabbages and kings at various parts of the campus and in the canteen. His relationship with his *alma mater* was one of deep affection. Even after he retired from the institution and was busy in his private practice, he was ever ready to meet and advise his students and help them in every way he could.

He will always be remembered for his care of patients, skill in diagnosis and expertise in the operation theatre which culminated in consistently excellent functional results for his patients.

May God grant him eternal peace and give his family the strength to bear his loss.

PARVEZ D. HAKIM

*Sunil Pandya, Dr Joshipura's student and patient, adds*

The gruff and stern exterior displayed by Dr Joshipura hid a warm and sensitive personality. It was interesting to see him observe persons around him and their doings with keen eyes. When I got to know him better, he would sum up his impressions of those around him in pithy and, at times, penetrating terms. He did not stand fools or scoundrels and ensured their disappearance from the scene with terse and, often, brusque comments.

He read widely and was always happy when asked about the books he was reading at the time. I advisedly use the plural term as he studied more than one book at a time. When an author impressed him he was quick to let others interested in literature know of his discovery and would gift the volume he had enjoyed to his junior colleagues. One such example in recent years is the book *Myth=Mithya* by Devdutt Pattanaik. Dr Joshipura was

impressed by the ease with which Pattanaik explained the bases for such Hindu beliefs as the existence of 30 million deities, five heads of Brahma (no, I am not making a mistake), the manner in which Yama is believed to keep accounts and practices such as why we offer betel leaves to guests. A note accompanied the gift of this book: 'Please read this book slowly and in stages. It demands rumination. I have read just a third of it in a month. Would like to discuss it after you have read it. Please keep the book with you.' When told that Dr Pattanaik was an old student of his at the Grant Medical College, he was pleased as Punch.

Dr Vijay Dave, who retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Neurosurgery at what was then called the King George Medical College Hospital in Lucknow, had worked for some years as assistant honorary neurosurgeon at Grant Medical College and Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals. He tells us of how he was befriended by Dr Joshipura. Seeing Dr Dave as a newcomer, yet to find his feet in the institution, Dr Joshipura took him under his wing. Many were the afternoons when Dr Joshipura would ascertain that Dr Dave had a couple of free hours after lunch. 'Vijay,' Dr Joshipura would say, 'there is an interesting exhibition on at the Jehangir Art Gallery (or the Taj Art Gallery or at the

Cowasjee Jehangir Hall or at the Prince of Wales Museum). Let's go and see what's on offer.' He would bundle Dr Dave in his car and off they would go.

He was also fond of music and I recall on a particularly rainy day the manner in which he looked at the sky, the long operation list he had to face and say, wistfully, 'At such a time, we should be sitting on a verandah facing the sea with gin at our side and Handel's *Water Music* in the air!'

He was not fond of writing but when he had to send in a paper, he insisted on revisions where the principal goal was to cut out everything that was not essential in the text. The pared down version was a fraction of the original but had the merit of conveying his meaning with no danger of any accusation of verbiage. Each patient examined by him at his consulting rooms was provided a type-written note banged out by himself on his portable typewriter. The entire clinical story was summarized in 4-6 lines and was followed by his diagnosis and suggested treatment. So too was his speech and it was rare to hear him speak for more than a few minutes at a time.

We miss him greatly.

SUNIL K. PANDYA

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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 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