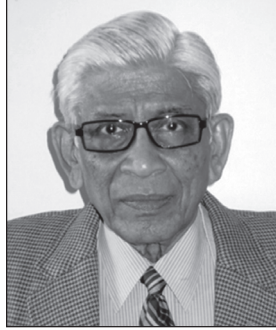


Obituary

Subimal Roy

(1 November 1933–1 March 2015)



Professor Subimal Roy was my teacher who initiated me into neuropathology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, and followed my progress in the field, mentoring when necessary, not showing his hand.

Professor Subimal Roy was the second of four siblings of Dr H.K. Roy, the only doctor in his village Sumanta Khanda and several

neighbouring areas in West Bengal and dedicated to the service of the villagers. This village did not have electricity even till the year 2000. Mrs N. Roy, the mother was strict and instrumental in imparting high educational and ethical standards in her children.

Dr Subimal Roy completed his MBBS from Calcutta National Medical College in 1956, and did his housemanship at Bankura Medical College. He moved to AIIMS in 1959 and completed his MD in Pathology, working on a dissertation titled 'Biochemical and morphological evolution of endemic goitre' under Professor V. Ramalingaswamy. In 1964, Dr Roy went to the University of Sheffield, England to pursue his PhD under Professor Gadiyali facilitated by Professor Collins, a doyen in bone pathology at that time. Following the sudden demise of Professor Collins, his wife Mrs Collins took personal care of Dr Roy to help him settle in the UK. His PhD work on 'Ultrastructural study of synovial joint in health and disease' is an authoritative and seminal account and was published as a monograph with excellent illustrations by Butterworth's of London in 1969. He pursued his interest in ultrastructural studies of various neoplastic and non-neoplastic tissues for a long time.

During his stay in the UK, he developed a keen interest in neuropathology and had initial training under Professor Wallman. In addition he worked with Professor Dutowitz, a doyen in the field of myopathology and did ultrastructural studies in muscle disorder, especially spinal muscular atrophy. On his return from the UK, he joined as an Assistant Professor of Pathology at AIIMS in 1969–70. In 1973–74, he went to the Division of Neuropathology, Montefiore Hospital and Medical Centre and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, USA on a WHO fellowship and trained in neuropathology under late Professor Zimmerman and Professor Asio Hirano, preserving his interest in ultrastructural studies of the nervous system. He went on to become Professor of Pathology at AIIMS and retired as Head of the Department in 1991. Subsequently, he served as Professor of Pathology at King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia till 1999. On his return, Professor Subimal Roy joined as a Senior Consultant at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi and continued to mentor and train the students till his last days.

Dr Roy, a man with an amicable and pleasant personality, had a wide circle of friends and students. As a teacher he expressed

immense pride in the success and achievements of his students and constantly encouraged them. Dr Jag Bhavan, one of his students, as a tribute to the teacher instituted an endowment 'Subimal Roy International Dermatology Fellowship' at Boston University, USA in 2001. Dr Chitra Sarkar, presently Professor of Neuropathology at AIIMS, was probably the one closest to him and both together built and nurtured the Department of Neuropathology. His major scientific contribution in the field of neuropathology related to ultrastructural features of brain tumours and pituitary adenomas. He authored more than 200 high-quality research publications in national and international journals. He was conferred the 'Lifetime achievement award' by the Delhi Neurological Association and Neurological Society of India. He was a Fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences and Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad.

Teaching was very close to his heart and generations of students trained by him including me, admired him and held him in high esteem. I had the privilege of closely interacting with him during my stay at AIIMS in the Department of Pathology from 1970 to 1979. During one of his trips to Bangalore (present Bengaluru) to see his son, Abhijit Roy who was pursuing Engineering, I had the privilege of taking him to the Human Brain Bank and he greatly appreciated it and spoke of it with pride.

The mantra of Professor Subimal Roy's life was 'hard work' and he preached the same to his children and students. He was a strong believer of God and the teachings of Swamy Vivekananda. His only passion was his work and studies. In addition to his professional academic books, he read texts on religion, motivation and life. He rarely read novels or watched television. As a true Bengali, he had a 'sweet tooth' and shared sweets with friends and students, especially during the Puja days.

When Professor Roy immersed himself in his work, research and teaching, his wife Mrs Pratima Roy was the pillar of strength to the family taking care of the family and mentoring their son Mr Abhijit Roy and daughter Dr Rakhi Biswas.

We all wished him to be the first president of the Neuropathology Society of India, a newly evolving professional body, but God willed otherwise. The first Presidential Oration during the national conference will be dedicated to him. The fraternity of Neuroscience, especially Neuropathology, will miss his constant support and guidance.

This is my humble homage to my teacher who initiated and followed to see me evolve into a neuropathologist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to Mr Abhijit Roy, Dr Subimal Roy's son for sharing some family details.

S.K. SHANKAR
 Department of Neuropathology
 Neurobiology Research Centre
 National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences
 (NIMHANS)
 Bengaluru
 Karnataka