

OBITUARY

Prof. Badri Nath Tandon: 1931–2018

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The 5th of March 2018 was a sad day for all of us especially those belonging to the field of Gastroenterology and Hepatology not only in India but even abroad since we lost our beloved teacher Prof. B N Tandon on that day.

Prof. Tandon completed his MBBS and MD from King George Medical College, Lucknow, and was appointed as a faculty in Medicine at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, in 1962. He later was trained at MIT and Harvard in the USA in Gastroenterology and Nutrition. After his return from abroad, he founded the Department of Gastroenterology in 1973 at AIIMS, New Delhi, and went on to start DM program. The Department over the years made a name for itself in the field of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, and Nutrition and became noticed as the best Gastroenterology Department in the country and amongst the top in Asian Pacific region. During his tenure, innumerable gastroenterologists and hepatologists were

trained, who now are occupying leadership positions in India and abroad. He along with Prof. Rakesh Tandon, Prof. M P Sharma, and Prof. D K Bhargava formed a formidable team with different specialty interests in Gastroenterology, thereby imparting a wholesome training to the students. He established the Surgical Gastroenterology Department at AIIMS under the leadership of Prof. Samiran Nundy, a brilliant surgeon. This Department started MCh course in the discipline—which has now trained many surgeons who are leading the liver transplant program in the country.

He was instrumental in starting the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) which became a national program of taking care of children below 5 years of age throughout the country. At weekends, he would travel to different parts of the country to train and supervise the ICDS program and continued as the Chairman of the Central Technical Committee of the program till he superannuated from AIIMS, New Delhi. The ICDS Program is the nation's and the world's largest nutrition, health, and psychosocial program for the children. He was also the Chairman of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) National Taskforce on viral hepatitis for a fairly long time.

He also was instrumental in starting the Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences at Patna and the Pushpawati Singhanian Institute in Delhi both of which are flourishing at their own places.

He published more than 300 research papers in reputed journals like *Lancet*, *Gastroenterology*, *Hepatology*, *Gut*, *Journal of Hepatology*, *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, and *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology*. His research interests included characterization of ulcerative colitis; adverse effects of protein-calorie malnutrition on the intestine, pancreas, and liver and their reversibility by dietary management; role of intestinal parasites in tropical sprue; epidemics of toxic liver injury due to natural food toxins; epidemiology of hepatitis B and C; epidemics of viral hepatitis in India; and isolation of hepatitis E virus as a cause of these epidemics. He also described a new entity, namely “Subacute Hepatic Failure,” which uniformly had a bad prognosis. His obsession

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with hepatology culminated in the development of Hepatology as a specialty throughout the country.

He was also instrumental in creating the Indian Society of Gastroenterology along with his peers in 1961 which, by now, has transformed into a giant society involved in a lot of national Gastroenterology and Hepatology issues. He, along with Prof. Kunio Okuda, a globally respected hepatologist from Japan, founded the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of Liver (APASL) that held its annual meeting at AIIMS, New Delhi, in 1986. He also started the Journal of Tropical Gastroenterology along with Prof. Samiran Nundy, which is now a leading indexed journal in the field.

He was a fellow of the prestigious Indian National Science Academy (FNA), National Academy of Medical Sciences (FAMS), Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (FIAPSM), and Indian Public Health Association (FIPHA). He had been the President of International Association for the Study of the Liver (IASL) and APASL. He was the President of Indian Society of Gastroenterology and Nutrition Society of India. He had also been the Vice President of the World Association of Gastroenterology. At the time of his demise, he was the Chairperson of Digestive Diseases Foundation of India, Metro Centre for Liver and Digestive Diseases, Noida, and Centre for Liver and Digestives of ABC Foundation, Delhi.

His scientific contributions and services in the field of health have been recognized by the way of several national and international orations and awards. He received the prestigious Padma Bhushan Award from the President of India in 1986 and Presidium of Russian Academy of Medical Sciences in 1995. He was awarded the Kent Memorial Award by the

National Homeopathic Association in 1998 for exemplary holistic medical services by providing physical, mental, and psychosocial care to people by combining modern science and ancient cultural values.

Prof. Tandon was a scholar, a gastroenterologist par excellence, a stern disciplinarian, and an excellent teacher. He had unique features in his personality. He was a stickler for time and would always arrive in the AB2 Gastroenterology wards at 8 AM sharp. He was very rationale in his approach to the management of patients and would shun doing unnecessary investigations. His own practice was impeccable and there is much all of us can learn from it.

Many students of his including me have always admired him. Without his leadership, many of us would not have been able to achieve or perform as we have done now. On behalf of his students, patients, and colleagues and others in the country, we express our sorrow for the void he has created for us. He was truly a legend with unique attributes. He will always be remembered for his care of patients, skills in diagnosis, and expertise in treatments, which culminated in consistently excellent functional results for his patients.

His wife had left for heavenly abode before him. He has left behind his eldest daughter Neena who lives in the USA, and sons Anurag, a senior Gastroenterologist at Delhi, and Vivek, a Surgical Gastroenterologist, also at Delhi, both of whom are well settled.

I am sure Prof. Tandon would be at peace for the immense contributions he made in every walk of life through which he traveled. The void left by his death cannot be filled but his students will ensure that his ideas and teachings are disseminated far and wide.