



M.C. Maheshwari, President NSI 2001

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Introduction & Family Background:

Dr. M.C. Maheshwari (MCM) was born in a rich Zamindari family in a village in Uttar Pradesh. His parents wanted to educate the children even though the general environment was not conducive. After some years the parents decided to move to Lucknow and desired that young Maheshwari become a doctor though he was primarily interested in mathematics and science. Joining King George's Medical College, Lucknow, MCM completed MBBS in 1961 and M.D. (Gen Medicine) in 1964. During his post-graduation he developed an interest in neurology. This led to formal training in the UK and USA. Having decided to settle down in India MCM returned and joined the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Dr. Maheshwari's wife is a gynecologist. Both their children (one son and one daughter) are doctors.

Medical education:

In his early years at AIIMS, MCM realized limitations of doing basic research in a clinical subject. Increasing clinical work led to emphasizing the clinical bed side approach and learning. Bed side learning resulted in revisiting Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology books. This principle was implemented in D.M. training programme also. MCM realized that old Neurology (India) Journal volumes were not available even in the National Medical Library and AIIMS Library. Hence for the first time an abstract volume of Neurology (India) of the first 25 years was made available in all medical colleges, libraries and to all members of the NSI.

Initially Epilepsy programmes were very limited and MCM had reservations about the functioning of the India Epilepsy Association (IEA). The 18th International Epilepsy congress was held in India. This led to a stimulus for better epilepsy programmes in India. Money saved from the 18th International Epilepsy Congress resulted in increased activities of the

IEA. Neurology, Neurosurgery and its allied branches were gradually spreading all over India because of the need and foresight of a few visionaries. Clinical services were supplemented with academic excellence. AIIMS New Delhi contributed significantly in the training of neurologists and neurosurgeons from all parts of the country including the Armed Forces.

From his OPD experience, MCM realized that the public required reliable authentic knowledge, in simple terms, about their symptoms and health conditions. Close discussions with patients and allaying their fear and anxiety was as important as providing a prescription. The National Book Trust was persuaded to bring out inforatory books at affordable prices on common subjects like epilepsy, headache and stroke. In addition about 250 papers were published in National and International journals. Some of these papers were based on D.M. students dissertations. Dr. Maheshwari believes that the capacity to work is fixed. However in the beginning this capacity to work can be developed, enhanced or modified. If one works in life with the capacity one has, with honesty and sincerity, maximum satisfaction and peace of mind follows. He has followed this principle to the best of his capability.

His former residents who are now senior neurologists, are established practically in every state of India. MCM pointed out that his approach to life was to accept tasks which came in his way or was given to him. He always did his best to fulfill the task, without any bias or consideration. Immensely satisfied, at the end of his career he reiterated that he was never after positions in academic societies.

Academic achievements:

Awarded the **Padma Shri in 2001**, Prof. Maheshwari retired the same year as Head of the Department of Neurology, Chief of Neuro Science Center and Dean of All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

Reminiscences and Take Home Message:

Medical sciences in general has witnessed great changes both in diagnostic and therapeutic areas in the last 40 to 50 years. Neurological sciences did not lack behind. There has been an all round development in the approach to neurological disorders including developmental and neurodegenerative

diseases. These were earlier only part of academic discussions. Advances in neuroradiology and therapeutics have raised patients confidence in the management of neurological diseases. Immunological and genetic testing have opened new possibilities. While conceding the importance of documenting pathological processes in individual patients, it is stressed that clinical sense and experience should not be left aside, forgotten altogether or underestimated. An analytical approach to the patients' problems is very often most rewarding. For doctors, achieving patient contentment should be the primary objective.

While facilities for management of neurological disorders were spreading and extending all over the country, the need for development of a National Epilepsy center was felt. It was realized that all services, related to epilepsy, including social, educational and occupational besides medical and surgical should be included in such a dedicated epilepsy center. The National Epilepsy Centre should become the nodal point for the development of other regional centers and in the neighboring SAARC countries. Dr. Maheshwari laments that he could not complete this task.

Doctors should not be arrogant, should have helping attitude towards their patients and should exude ability and confidence to discuss problems with their patients. Doctors should be grateful to All Mighty God for having bestowed on them the opportunity, to help mankind. It is but natural to wish to be reborn, to correct or mend one's mistakes in this life. He is also grateful to his patients. ■