

I was born on 23 Jan 1933 in a small hill station, Mount Abu, now in the State of Rajasthan. The population then was only 4^{1/2} thousand and every citizen knew every other. Mount Abu is well known for its schools, temples, lake and mountains. The school days were therefore very happy with dedicated teachers, extra curricular activities and sports. I got a merit scholarship in the high school examination and moved to Jaipur for pre-medical at the University of Rajasthan. Soon after the partition, Mount Abu belonged to the Bombay State. After the inter-science, despite being first in merit, I had problems seeking admission. Grant Medical College was unwilling to accept me as I had done my pre-medical, that is 12th, from Rajasthan University. Jaipur Medical College was unwilling to admit me for reasons of domicile. (Mount Abu was in Bombay State and I did not have domicile of Rajasthan.) Luckily for me, Grant Medical College, had 4 seats reserved for students from Universities other than Bombay University. Thus I came to Grant Medical College to begin my medical career.

Grant Medical College had a fine tradition, excellent teachers and a spirit of camaraderie. Those were very happy days. Despite the poor living conditions in the "old hostel", fellows and colleagues made up happy atmosphere. There was a good healthy rivalry (for sports and academics) between the different medical institutions of Bombay namely G. S. Medical College, Topiwala National Medical College and Grant Medical College. After graduation, I was fortunate to work under very dedicated teachers like Dr. R. V. Sathe, Dr. N.H. Wadia, Dr. J. S. Moos and Dr. P. M. Udani, to name a few. There was a lot to learn in the essentials of medicine. The discipline of neurology was quite new. Dr. Menino D'Souza was physician and neurologist. He was kind-hearted, easy and encouraged the juniors. He had the sixth sense to make quick intuitive neurologic diagnosis. It is rare to get a chief who gives all freedom and is non-interfering. Dr. Wadia had just returned from UK after training under Lord Russel Brain. (We had read Brain's book in neurology). He was brimming with enthusiasm. To make an accurate clinical diagnosis of neurological conditions by simple logic and deduction was to me very impressive. Being an excellent teacher, students from all medical colleges flocked to Dr. Wadia's clinic held every Wednesday. Both Dr. Wadia and Dr. Moos took keen interest in my career and to them I owe a great deal. Through his efforts, Dr. Wadia was able to bring Prof. Darab Dastur to start the Neuropathology Department and soon Dr. Gajendra Sinh, (trained at Vellore) joined as a neurosurgeon. Dr. Jimmy Sidhwa was the neuroradiologist. We had an excellent dedicated team. Notes were kept very well and we also had an independent system of classification and indexing. This resulted in collection of interesting material. Very soon state-of-the-art papers were written by Dr. Wadia and Dr. Dastur in the Departments of Neurology and Neuropathology at Grant Medical college.

There were some other traditions established by Dr. Wadia and his colleagues namely Dr. E. P. Bharucha and Dr. Anil Desai. We have clinical meetings every month on second Saturday, which are extremely well attended with good case discussions. This was the period when Indian experience with Wilson's disease, cranio-vertebral abnormalities and tuberculosis meningomyelitis were described.

In 1959 I cleared my M.D. in internal medicine. Prof Wadia gave me personal letters to some of his colleagues in London who were very helpful in my pursuing neurology as a career. Dr. Moos, who is a cardiologist, took a lot of personal interest and guided me. I was able to start a house job in Neurosurgery at the Brook General Hospital. Under Sir Geoffrey Knight, Mr. Northcroft and Mr. J. R. Gibbs soon after reaching London. In the interview, I had expressed that my main idea would be to work in the ward and learn the essentials of neurology but I was not particularly keen to enter the operation theatre. Despite this they accepted me. Dr. Raymond Hierons was the neurologist. They were happy six

months during which time I also prepared for the membership of Edinburgh. I had met Professor R. A. Henson, mentor of Dr. Wadia, who was helpful to me in getting the job at the Maidavale Hospital attached to the Institute of Neurology in London. I was able to work under different chiefs like Dr. Sam Nevin, Dr. R. A. Henson, Dr. Reginald Kelly, Dr. Paul Sandifer and also Mr. Valentine Logue, the neurosurgeon of great eminence. Lord Russell Brain by that time had retired but he used to come occasionally to see the patients. The greatest joy in working in the London Hospital was to see the functioning of the NHS, the excellent clinical teaching that they imparted, the responsibility they left to the residents and the complete family atmosphere. One also learnt for the first time that what is written in books is not the 'Gospel Truth' and what is needed is to keep inquiring and questioning. During my residency at the Maidavale Hospital a good interaction began between Queen's Square and Maidavale Hospital which were sister institutions. My co-residents namely Dr. Gerald Stern, Dr. Net Blau and Dr. Ernest Jellineck became consultants of repute. During my stay on the house, several courses were conducted for teaching neurology to MRCP candidates, where several Indian colleagues participated including Dr. Shyam Hussain.

I returned to India in 1962. To my misfortune, Prof. Wadia returning from South America en route Portugal to India was detained at Lisbon. This was the time when Goa was liberated and we were at war with Portugal. Therefore we sadly missed the presence of Dr. Wadia. Dr. Wadia was instrumental in my returning to India and arranging the appointments at Sir J. J. Hospital and Bombay Hospital. Mine was perhaps one of the few jobs advertised by Bombay Hospital and Dr. R. G. Ginde had written to get my confidentials from my teachers including Lord Brain for England. These were the days when one could combine the honoraryship at the Sir J. J. Group of Hospitals, that is part time in mornings and one could also come and work in a private institution like Bombay Hospital and combine teaching with practice of neurology. For me this was a very happy combination. We continued to have Tuesdays joint rounds when important cases were discussed. I continued to enjoy the Saturday meetings. The clinical sessions were very interesting. There were no imaging facilities like CT scans and MRI, which have made the diagnostic dilemma to a great extent very much simpler. We had to resort to angiography and air studies and myelography which at times can be quite unpleasant. It needed a clinical skill and judgement to decide whether or not to subject the patient to these investigations.

During this period we had visitors from overseas (UK, Europe, Australia, America) like Lord John Walton, Peter Thomas, Reginald Kelly, Ralph Ross Russel, Igata of Japan, to name a few. There was a keen interest in Indian neurology. The ward rounds on those occasions became exciting. There were several inputs from the visiting scientists. Dr. Wadia was able to collect several cases of ataxia with slow eye movements. I was able to collect cases of demyelinating diseases and wrote a paper with Dr. Wadia in the Journal of Neurological Sciences. Dr. Dastur did postmortem on two of my patients which was the first proof of existence of multiple sclerosis in India. I became interested in myelopathies of unknown aetiology and with Dr. Dastur described "myelopathies with Eales' disease"

There was a great harmony in the department of Neurology. Residents of medicine during M. D. gave neurology residency as their first preference. We had excellent residents who contributed considerably to the study of the patients. We also had referrals from several institutions for the opinion on neurological problems. Our teachers were also available at any time for seriously ill patients.

I had the pleasure of working with Dr. R. G. Ginde at Bombay Hospital as well. He was in top spirits when he played golf, in which game I am told he was very good. Although he started rather late in neurosurgery at the Montreal Neurologic Institute he was one of the rare neurosurgeons who had an excellent insight into medical neurology and electrophysiology. He discussed neuropathology with Dr. Darab Dastur. He was therefore a complete neuroscientist. It was a pleasure to watch him because in those days when micro-neurosurgery was not developed he would not close the wound unless the returning fluid was absolutely clear. Therefore, it was not a surprise when there were hardly any complications when he did the surgery. The greatest pleasure was to watch him when he finished the surgery to sit

down in his office and write notes in his own hand and in great detail. He kept meticulous notes of whatever he did. I also had the occasion to attend some parties at his residence. With great care he organised every minute of the party and was an excellent host. In one of the parties he also arranged a 'Housy' or some or the other game in which everybody could be involved and there was a complete feeling of homeliness and friendliness in that environment. Otherwise Dr. Ginde was very particular, a hard task master and wanted work to be done with extreme care, without any mistakes. Subsequently, Dr. S.N. Bhagwati had joined Bombay Hospital and Sir. J. J. Hospital about the same time I returned. He has always been very dynamic, enthusiastic, innovative and wanting to do more and more. Good clinical results in neurology can be obtained when one is associated with a good neurosurgeon.

With the retirement of Prof. N. H. Wadia, I took over as the Head of Department of Neurology in July 1991. We continued to have weekly meetings of discussions on every Tuesday with my colleagues - Dr. S. Katrak and Dr. Neeta Mehta. These were learning sessions as well because our able registrars would prepare seminar topics and we had good discussions on the cases. I continued my associations with Bombay Hospital and it became a post graduate medical institute (Bombay Hospital Institute of Medical Sciences) in January 1991. I have been Professor and Head of the Department of Neurology in this Institute since. Earlier, we were training the candidates only for the diploma of the national board, but since this change we are now also having candidates for DM Neurology. We are indeed fortunate for having good equipment and good allied branches. We have a full fledged Electrophysiology Department with Dr. Subhada Pandya and Dr. Kushnuma Mansukani, who are leading experts in the field of EMG and evoked potentials. They have managed to train several students. In the EEG Department we had the benefit of Mr. Vinayak Mehta, who on his own steam went to Montreal Neurologic Institute to work in the Department of EEG. His trainees Mr. Devdutt Mehta and Mrs. Smita Kapadia continued to do EEGs of excellent quality. We have also been able to have the services, guidance and expertise of Dr. Darab Dastur assisted by Dr. Daya Maghani in the Department of Neuropathology. We have an excellent biochemical department. The neurosurgical department has eminent neurosurgeons like Dr. S. N. Bhagwati and Dr. K. E. Turel. Dr. Turel began his training under Dr. Bhagwati and subsequently went to Dr. Semi in Germany to learn the microneurosurgical techniques. As a neurologist, I would say' that the results of their surgery have been excellent. We also have state-of-the-art CT scan and M R I Departments. Overall, students are able to get good training in the discipline of neurology.

Active interest was pursued in the field of academic neurology and my main interests have been demyelinating diseases, multiple sclerosis, and non-compressive myelopathy including myelopathy associated with Eales' disease, infections of the nervous system including tuberculosis meningitis, solitary ring enhancing lesion (cysticercosis) and its relation to seizure disorder. On account of our interests in the non-compressive myelopathies, we were able to study HTLV1 myelopathy and we were able to describe 3 patients. Dr. Osame and his colleagues from Japan visited our department on successive occasions and we were able to collaborate. We were also able to collaborate with Prof. Stuart Cook of New Jersey Medical School to compare our data with that of USA in multiple sclerosis. We also did some immunologic work in the GB syndrome. Over the years, I was fascinated by the syndrome of 'large head and progressive motor handicap'. I was rather struck by the fact that majority of the children belonged to the 'Agarwal Community'. We were able to collect these children, work them up with CT scan and MRI and presented the data before the United Leukodystrophy Foundation in U. S. A. We were able to write it up and we are even now continuing to collaborate for the genetic work up. With help from Dr. Nemish Shah Cardiovascular surgeon, we were able to do thymectomy in patients with myasthenia gravis. We have a large series of patients with myasthenia but regrettably we have not been able to analyse the data to write our experiences.

At the Bombay Hospital we are developing the sub-specialities. Dr. Jimmy Lalkaka is taking interest in the field of movement disorders and Dr. Satish Khadilkar is taking interest in the field of muscle disorders. We hope to have persons dealing with epilepsy and strokes.

It was a pleasure to visit several institutes here and abroad. In clinical neurology we have been doing reasonably well. I am distressed we don't have centres of excellence for training in basics. With the help of basic scientists in the field of neurology, we may be able to do research of quality.

It has also been a pleasure to be a teacher in the University of Bombay and to be an examiner in Bombay University and several universities in India. I get distressed when the candidate does not succeed. I have always felt very strongly that the entry point should be difficult but the exit point should be easy. Our training programme should be tightened so that they get a comprehensive good training and the examination should really become superfluous. There is indeed a need for examinations as this makes the students work hard to reach the goal. Examination should be however more to assess the attitude and the aptitude rather than content of knowledge.

I managed to take an active part in the activities of the Neurological Society of India. I have been able to attend majority of the national meetings and also nearly all the international meetings after 1973. I was the National delegate at the Hamburg meeting when we invited the World Federation of Neurology Meeting in India in 1989. The meeting was successful. Along with this meeting we also had an international meeting of the neurosurgeons and the International League Against Epilepsy. The meetings were highly successful. It accelerated the growth of 'neurosciences in India. We were recognised by the world community' Not only that, we were left with substantial money to form the trusts for neurosurgeons and neurologists and the epilepsy society. From this trust it is possible to organise meetings and send delegates overseas to partake in international meetings. Several colleagues have taken advantage in the form of financial help from this trust'

I was the treasurer for the Neurological society of India from 1981 to 1983. I was surprised to find that there was no system of indexing. With the help of my secretary Katie Vania we were able to introduce a system. As a member of the executive committee I was distressed to find that there was only one executive meeting in the year and that too a hurried one so that important decisions could not be taken. When I took over as the President of the Neurological Society of India I suggested to have two or three executive committee meetings in the year. Recently, this system has been introduced and I am sure it will help to improve the cause of neuroscience activities by the society. In 1992, the Indian Academy of Neurology was founded. I continue to be a member of both the societies. A meeting of the NSI (combined society) gives an advantage to meet the neurosurgical colleagues as well. There is much in common between neurologists and neurosurgeons and we need each other's help. At the same time, with the rising numbers of the neurologists I suppose, the future needs will be better served by the Academy of Neurologists. I have also been involved with the Indian Epilepsy Association, especially with the activities of the Bombay branch. During my tenure as the Secretary of the Indian Epilepsy Association, Bombay Branch, we organised an epilepsy week which was highly successful. We gave several educational lectures through the Rotary Club, Lions Club, Radio talks. We organised an exhibition of posters for teaching, and also through director Mr. Shyam Benegal made a film on epilepsy which was subsequently donated to the Films Division of India for exhibition all over the country. Currently, I am the President of the Indian Epilepsy Association, Bombay Branch. Dr. Pravina Shah, the Secretary, is doing a splendid job. After Bangalore this is the second most active group in the country.

In the recent years, I have become interested in medical education and ethics. It is really a pleasure to participate in the sessions on medical education, ethics and delivery of neurologic sciences at international meetings. It has also been a pleasure for me to organise Neurology Update Meetings. The first was at the Taj Palace Hotel at New Delhi and subsequently at the Department of Neurology, Bombay. I hope I am able to organize such meetings in future with the help of my colleagues.

One is always grateful for what one has received over the years from the students, residents, nursing staff, colleagues and the patients. If I get a little recognition here and there or an award, it is really the recognition of the work of all the colleagues of the department. In all that I have done, I am grateful to my wife Asha (herself a gynaecologist) who has given full support. Our daughter Seema took up medicine and with her husband Dr. Jayesh Mehta is doing haematology-oncology (Bone marrow transplantation). Our son Aneesh is pursuing training in neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston and his wife Priya plans to pursue Internal Medicine.