Presidential Address

Presidential address at IAPSCON 2007, Jaipur

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Distinguished dignitaries on the dais, guests, president elect of IAPS, past presidents, past secretaries of our Association, present secretary and other office bearers, national and overseas faculties, it gives me a great pleasure and a humbling experience to stand before you today evening to deliver the Presidential Address of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons.

After my graduation from Calcutta, presently known as Kolkata, I joined Postgraduate Institute (PGI), Chandigarh, for postgraduation in General Surgery. When I left Calcutta, Pediatric Surgery Services were available mainly at Nil Ratan Sarkar Medical College under the leadership of Dr. Subir Kumar Chatterjee. During my training in General Surgery at PGI, I was posted in pediatric surgery and I was fortunate to get trained by teachers like Dr. I.C. Pathak and Dr. S K. Mitra. I was inspired by them to take up pediatric surgery as my career. After my completion of my course in Pediatric Surgery at PGI, I joined Health Services in West Bengal (at present known as West Bengal Medical Education Services). Working for a short period at Dr. B.C. Roy Memorial Hospital for Children at Calcutta, I joined as a sole pediatric surgeon at the Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (IPGMER), Calcutta (one of the oldest postgraduate institutes in India). There was no separate pediatric surgery OPD and OT. Children ward was separate but the surgical children used to be admitted under General Surgeons. With passage of time, I learnt how to overcome the resistance of General Surgeons and when I left IPGMER to join Nil Ratan Sarkar Medical College, it was a Government sanctioned Pediatric Surgery Department at IPGMER with separate ward, OPD, OT, adequate teaching and junior staffs and all necessary modern equipments.

At present, all the medical colleges at Kolkata have got Pediatric Surgery Departments. Many private centers are also doing excellent work. The scenario is more or less same in other metropolitan cities in India. Unfortunately, like other super specialties, Pediatric Surgeons are concentrated in urban areas only. During all this period, I felt that we, as Pediatric Surgeons need to take some administrative responsibilities to expedite the development of pediatric surgery. Dr. (Mrs.) S.S. Desmukh worked very successfully as the Vice-Chancellor of Mumbai University. Dr. I.C. Pathak served as the Director of PGI, Chandigarh, and played a great role in the development of pediatric surgery at PGI. Recently, I visited Nair Hospital, Mumbai, and was fascinated to see how Dr. S.N. Oak, Professor and Head of Pediatric Surgery, and Dean of Nair Hospital, is planning the developmental work for his institute and also for his department. Pediatric Surgery Department in Nair Hospital has been accredited by ISO. I congratulate Dr. Oak for his dual role. Dr. Ram Kumar Raghupathy, our past President, is also working as Dean and is doing a commendable job. Dr. Ashley D’Cruz is well known not only as a very good Pediatric Surgeon but also as a very good administrator. Dr. Narpat Singh Sekhawat and several others are doing the job of Medical Superintendent and trying to help in the progress of pediatric surgery.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

I take this opportunity to welcome our new members of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons. This is a special occasion for all new members and I congratulate you on becoming a member of our Association. When I became a member of IAPS, it was necessary to become a member of the Association of Surgeons of India first and then get the membership of IAPS. The rules have changed now. Similarly, I am a full member of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics (IAP), but Pediatric Surgeons who have enrolled recently as new members in IAP are all given associate status. We should take up this matter with IAP office bearers. I will request all our new members to keep association with Indian Academy of Pediatrics, Association of Surgeons of India and National Neonatology Forum.

TRAINING

We are trying to save ailing babies and give them a better quality of life and long life. Our training and success in practical life must be measured in this perspective. There was a decline in the number of applicants to our MCh training centers for a short period, but recently it has started to rebound and the trend is encouraging. Unfortunately, some of the centers accredited by National Board are not getting students regularly. So far, there are no definite guidelines from MCI or
Ministry of Health to draw a distinction between those who are qualified to do pediatric surgery and those who are not. We are aware of the conflicts between MCI and National Board. Pediatric surgery in India has come a long way since our founder members, namely Dr. R.K. Gandhi, Dr. I.C. Pathak, Dr. K.C. Sogani, Dr. Purushottam Upadhyaya, Dr. Subir Kumar Chatterjee, Dr. M.S. Ramkrishnan, Dr. T. Dorairajan and several others established this Association. Unfortunately, we are yet to achieve leadership position in major national organizations. As a Pediatric Surgeon, I feel our Association should try to convince MCI and Ministry of Health to make it a law to implement the following guidelines:

1. All children, 6 years of age and younger, should be operated by Pediatric Surgeons.
2. All children below the age of 2 years who require surgery should be anesthetized by Pediatric Anesthetists. We must get the services of anesthetists specially trained in neonatal anesthesia.
3. All patients below the age of 12 years must get free treatment in government hospitals.
4. Measures should be taken to promote pediatric radiology, pediatric pathology and allied specialties.
5. All children have a right for health and we should fight for it.

During last Asian Congress in New Delhi, I had the privilege to meet the Honorable Prime Minister of India, and we placed our demand. Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, was very keen to help us. During our meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr. D.K. Gupta briefed him about our progress and our problems. Dr. Gupta is in touch with Prime Minister's office and Ministry of Health to get a positive response. We should get very clear guidelines from MCI in the following matters:

1. Pediatric surgery teachers should teach pediatric surgery in MBBS.
2. Students of MD and DCh (Pediatric Medicine) should get rotational posting in pediatric surgery.
3. During Internship one week posting in pediatric surgery.
4. Nursing training program in pediatric surgery. Our nursing care, in most of the places, is not up to the mark. In 1999, at IAPSCON Calcutta, we had a joint meeting with the nurses from different parts of India and abroad. More than 160 nurses took active part in our meeting. In 2000 at Chandigarh IAPSCON, we had such program. Last effort of such meeting was seen in Asian Congress at Delhi last year. To get good result, we must improve our nursing care and form a definite guideline for continuing medical education for nurses interested pediatric surgery nursing.

**JOURNAL**

The Journal of Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons has come a long way. I pay my deep regards to those who had the foresight to develop this resource for our specialty. The journal has achieved a balance of high quality clinical and research publications. The journal is now having electronic submission and review of manuscripts. I am grateful to Emeritus Editor, Editor-in-Chief, Editors, editorial advisors and all the reviewers for their dedicated work. I personally feel that the term of three years of Editor-in-Chief is too short and it should be for 5 years and may be extended for another term after proper election.

**WORKSHOP AND STATE CONFERENCES**

I am sure and most of the members will agree with me that the standard of our workshops has improved considerably. Most of the workshops are being conducted by our own faculty members. Dr. Bharati Kulkarni organized urology workshop at Sion Hospital. Dr. Shivaji Mane showed his excellent skill in hypospadias surgery. He also came to Kolkata and demonstrated his techniques in urethroplasty. In the same workshop at Kolkata, Dr. Prem Puri demonstrated deflux injection and Dr. S.K. Mitra demonstrated fulguration of posterior urethral valves. In Chennai, we had a very fruitful laparoscopy workshop under the leadership of Dr. R.K. Bagdi. Dr. Rasik Shah, Dr. Selvarajan and Dr. Anirudh Shah demonstrating various procedures. At Kolkata AMASICON, Dr. Ravi Ramadwar was invited to speak and demonstrate pediatric laparoscopy. Recently at Hyderabad, Dr. Narendra has organized different thoracic procedures and was attended by a very good number of surgeons.

**AWARDS AND POSITIONS**

Our members are getting recognition from different organizations for their contribution in different spheres of life. The list is long but I cannot resist the temptation to mention a few. Dr. Subir Kumar Chatterjee founded the Department of Pediatric Surgery at Nil Ratan Sarkar Medical College, and till date the only MCh Pediatric Surgery Center in the whole of eastern India. Kolkata Corporation gave him recently a Civic Reception in the famous Town Hall of Kolkata. Most probably, this is the first time a medical person was given Civic Reception in Kolkata Town Hall. I was told by one of the officers of the Corporation that Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore were given Civic Reception in the same place. It is a rare honor, and I felt proud to witness the great occasion. Dr. Kamalesh Kumar Sharma has been awarded prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Award this year. I had the privilege to visit his Department at Jodhpur and saw...
his popularity amongst his colleagues and patients. My heartiest congratulations to Dr. K.K. Sharma. Our Editor-in-Chief, past Secretary and past President of IAPS, Dr. Devendra Kumar Gupta, has become a brand ambassador of pediatric surgery in India and abroad. Presently, he is the President of Asian Association of Pediatric Surgeons. He is also the President of Federation of Pediatric Surgeons of SAARC (FAPSS). The list of orations and awards he has received last year will make a long list. We are proud of you, Dr. Gupta. I also congratulate Delhi State Chapter and Dr. Gupta for getting World Congress in Delhi in 2010. Dr. Amol Chakraborty held the prestigious post of Sheriff of Kolkat. Recently, FAPSS has been registered with SAARC Secretariat at Kathmandu, Nepal. I welcome Dr. R.P. Chowdhary, a representative of Nepal, to join us and strengthen our friendship. FAPSS President, Dr. D.K. Gupta, has been authorized to select two persons for BAPS Fellowship each year from SAARC.

We have got two orations and IAPS Award Committee selects the best possible speakers. This year, Dr. D.K. Gupta will deliver MSR Oration. Dr. K.C. Sogani was nominated for Mridula Rohatgi Oration. Because of sad demise of Dr. K.C. Sogani, we decided to honor Dr. Sogani posthumously. While visiting Jaipur in the month of July 2007, we visited Dr. Sogani. He was recovering from a major operation. I was accompanied by Dr. D.K. Gupta, Dr. Anirudh Shah and several Pediatric Surgeons from Rajasthan. Dr. Sogani expressed his desire to donate Rs 2 lakhs to IAPS to start a Gold Medal in his name. Majority of the EC members felt that the medal should be started at Jaipur only. I never thought that he would leave us soon. In 1974 and 1983, IAPS Conferences were held at Jaipur under the leadership of Dr. K.C. Sogani. He was a great teacher. IAPS members will remember him for his contribution in tracheo-esophageal fistula. Dr. Jayant Radhakrishnan from USA is known to all of us and does not need any introduction. He will receive RK Gandhi Gold Medal this year. This year, Dr. Tripta Dutta will receive Dr. Dorairajan Gold Medal. I congratulate both of them.

Dr. Purushottam Upadhyaya Award was started in 2005 and attracted our young members. Unfortunately, the response to Purushottam Upadhyaya Research Award was poor this year. IAPS sincerely regrets the delay in announcing the award this year. The Association and the Foundation should look forward to a much better response next year. The purpose of the award will be served only when a large number of young members will come forward with their research publications enriching the research milieu of our Association.

Padmashree and a senior member Dr. Rathin Datta made a contribution of Rs 1 lakh in October 2005 to start an award in the name of his late wife Dr. Swapna Datta. On behalf of IAPS, I sincerely apologize to Dr. Datta for not implementing the award in right time and in proper way. We have taken steps to give Dr. Swapna Datta Award during our National Conference. Maharashtra Chapter wanted to start an award in the name of our past President, late Dr. Vinod K. Kapur. Once again, I sincerely regret and apologize for not being able to install the award.

INNSURANCE COVERAGE

National Insurance and New India Assurance (government organizations) have started a policy for pregnant mothers. If they make a policy within the first trimester, they get the coverage if a baby is born with congenital anomaly. We should keep in touch with our obstetrician colleagues and sought their help to popularize this policy.

RESEARCH IN PEDIATRIC SURGERY AND PUBLICATIONS

Good numbers of interesting and thought-provoking papers are being published from various centers in India. Unfortunately, original research work is done in very few centers. Dr. K.L.N. Rao, Professor and Head, PGI, Chandigarh, has got vast experience in basic and clinical research. In the beginning of his career, he popularized Prone Cross Table lateral views in ARM and classification of Pouch Colon. Since the time of Dr. Purushottam Upadhyaya and Dr. Mridula Rohatgi, AIIMS has contributed so much for technical innovations. Excellent research works are being conducted under the guidance of Dr. D.K. Gupta, Dr. V. Bhatnagar and Dr. M. Bajpai. Dr. Sudipta Sen from CMC Vellore, Dr. G.R. Prasad from Hyderabad have got good experience in research work. I appeal to all of them to make a plan of exchange program so that our interested young pediatric surgeons get the chance to have exposure to research programs in India. In this context, on behalf of myself and on behalf of our Association, I express my sincerest thanks to Prof. Richard Aziz Khan from Cincinnati, USA, an honorary member of IAPS and a recipient of Dr. RK Gandhi Gold Medal, who has helped a number of our members to visit his center of excellence.

I strongly feel that IAPS should have an Executive Office in the line of ASI office and IAP office.

One of my young friends, Dr. Sujit Chowdhary, asked me a very important question - "What is the market value of new pediatric surgeons in India?" It is a difficult question to answer. India is a diverse country and the picture is different from state to state. I personally feel that, with all the difficulties, pediatric surgeons are giving excellent...
service to the society and are earning a great respect from the society. Regarding market value in real term, it is better now than what I saw 10 years ago.

IAPS ELECTION

I congratulate Dr. Anirudh Shah, President Elect, for conducting the whole election process smoothly and in a fair manner.

Next turn of IAPSCON will be for Eastern Zone, and Guwahati, the capital of Assam, is ready to welcome you. Dr. N.C. Bhattacharya is an experienced organizer and has got a very good team. I am sure the meeting of IAPSCON 2008 will be a grand success.

I express my thanks to my departmental colleagues at IPGME&R and NRS Medical College for their continuous support and inspiration. I express my sincere thanks to my parents and my children. My wife, Dr. Madhumita Mukhopadhya, is here in the audience. I am grateful to her for all the support she has given me.

I express my sincere thanks to Dr. Narpat Singh Sekhawat, Dr. D.D. Sinha and the other members of the Organizing Committee for their hard work and dedication. I am aware that for last few weeks, Dr. Sinha and his team must be working day and night to make the conference a grand success. I express my thanks to different pharmaceutical companies and other organizations for their kind patronage.

Rajasthan is well known for excellent hospitality and various attractive places for tourism. I am sure all our guests, particularly those from overseas, will enjoy their stay and enrich our scientific meetings.

My address will remain incomplete if I do not express my thanks and gratitude to Dr. V.R. Ravikumar who has always helped me and our Association in different matters. He was the first person to start IAPS website which has become a very popular platform for scientific discussion.

To have more success, we must coordinate with our associate organizations. Each and every one of us has a role to play. Pediatric surgery has now obtained a considerable stature as a surgical specialty. We have got our journal, our own Association with rapidly increasing membership strengths and number of centers of excellence. I am sure we will definitely reach the goal by advancing our specialty.

I thank all of you for giving me your valuable time.

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