Obituary

Dr. B. K. H. Nair (10.06.1933 - 03.07.2004)

Professor Bala Krishna Hareendran Nair died at Trivandrum after a protracted illness at the age of 71. He was one of the pioneers in the specialty of dermatology and venereology in South India particularly in the state of Kerala. He had a brilliant academic career: B. Sc. (First Class), 1952; MBBS (First Rank and Gold Medal), 1957; DCH (RCP, London); 1961, MRCP (Edinburgh), 1964; DVD (Bombay), 1966; and FRCP (Edinburgh), 1980. He joined his Alma Mater, the Trivandrum Medical College, as a tutor in dermatovenereology in 1958 and retired from the same institution as Director and Professor in 1988. During the span of 30 years, he was instrumental in establishing and developing departments of dermatology and venereology in Trivandrum, Kottayam and Alleppey Government Medical Colleges.

Dr. B. K. H. Nair was particularly interested in the study of tropical dermatology and did significant research on scabies, leprosy, syphilis and cutaneous granulomas. He had published several papers in national and international journals. He was a postgraduate examiner for several universities. As an effective communicator and teacher, he was in great demand in CME and medical conferences. He was the founder secretary of the Kerala branch of the IADVL and later its president. He received several awards, including the Prof. K. C. Kandhari Award for Lifetime Achievement, awarded in the year 2000.

Prof. Nair was interested in seeing that dermatovenereology, an independent specialty, always remained with the mainstream of general medicine. He taught by example that every skin and STD specialist is basically a general physician. His concept was that the skin, being the largest organ of the body, reflected many systemic illnesses and therefore every skin patient should get a thorough physical examination by the specialist. Prof. Nair was a voracious reader and had a deep knowledge of various alternative systems of medicine, especially yoga and holistic medicine. His concern was always for the patient first and his innovative methods of treatment of certain skin diseases were quite effective and always affordable to the patient.

In his demise, the dermatology fraternity has lost an eminent physician who chose to specialize in dermatology, a path less taken at that time, and ended up by enriching the specialty in many ways. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Vijaya and his three children.

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