

Tribute to Dr. M K Chandrasekhara

Written by Dr. Subba Rao
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Dr M K Chandrashekara was the most complete pediatrician I got to see from close quarters for more than 25 years. My first encounter with Dr. Chandrashekara was way back in 1979 when I was a registrar in pediatrics at St.John's Medical college which housed one unit of pediatrics and was manned by me and Dr.Padmini Urs. She happened to be on leave and was told that a pediatrician from St. Martha's Hospital would come and take rounds. He came and stood at the entrance of the general ward and asked me what was the first case – I had not yet worked it up and I said so. Without going near the patient or taking a history he said it was a case of Spinal Muscular Atrophy- Wordnig Hoffman disease. I was not sure whether he was serious but indeed he was correct and instantly my respect for him grew high.

He had everlasting stamina, his rounds would start at 10 Am and go on till 3 PM- without a break. His passion for seeking details, keen interest in interpreting ECGs. He would insist on a walk through lab to see peripheral smears and sessions in radiology department to discuss x-rays as part of routine clinical work made him an all rounder.

In the early days we had facilities for ECHO only in Sindhi hospital. He would put all RHD cases in his car and personally take them for ECHO(M-Mode) and discuss with the cardiologists.He was very particular with medical records and he had a unique way of storing the data based on patients date of birth. This he did even in his private clinic and would always tell me that he needs to analyze all the patient data especially with reference to physical growth.

He kept up with recent advances and encouraged juniors like me to actively read and update. He was not far behind with regard to technology, his research with computer software "Ekalavya" in collaboration with IIT Madras developed probably one of the earliest medical softwares to help peripheral health workers to diagnose and treat simple pediatric disorders.

I can never forget how he drove me to the hospital and dropped me home for a whole month when I was operated for appendicitis. He had confessed that he memory was poor for anything other than patient care He had put a placard in the dash board behind his steering wheel " Pick up and drop Subba rao" so that he would not forget.

His personal attire was special, always came in full suit – his favourite one a bottle green suit and of course on off days he would come with his favourite blue and white checkered pant and a T shirt. He would throw a party without any excuse and fellowship was always free flowing and sponsored by him.

His baby friendly approach to children- sitting on the patients couch, making funny faces, carrying them around with him on rounds made him the best person to emulate.

Dr.MKC I will miss you a lot..... may your soul rest in peace.

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