Obituary

Framroz Pirojshaw Antia : 1916 - 2003

Dr. F. P. Antia was born in Mumbai on August 10, 1916 in a religious Parsee family; his father was a priest. He passed BSc (1938), MBBS (1941), MD (1944) and MRCP (London) in 1946. He obtained MS (Illinois, USA) in 1949. He was awarded FRCP (London) in 1969 and FAMS (India) in 1978.

He had the most enviable, extensive, experience in the field of gastroenterology, with the stalwarts in UK and USA and was one of the most well-trained gastroenterologists in the world. He worked as a Clinical Assistant to Sir Francis Avery Jones at Central Middlesex Hospital, London (1946), did a course in endoscopy at Harvard Medical College, Boston (1947), worked at Postgraduate School, University of Pennsylvania under Dr H L Bockus (1948), and as United States Government Research Fellow with Dr A C Ivy at University of Illinois (1949). Later on, he attended a course in Radioisotope Technique at University of Columbia (1958) and fiberoptic colonoscopy (CME), Jefferson Medical college, USA in September 1974.


Dr Antia was the Editor of Indian Journal of Gastroenterology from 1983 for a period of 5 years. He published an unique book “Clinical Dietetics and Nutrition”, Oxford University Press in 1966 and subsequent editions were published in 1973, 89, 97. He also wrote a chapter on Amoebiasis in Con’s Current Therapy (1971, 1981) and on Gastrointestinal Emergencies in a book written by Vakil and Udawadia (Oxford University Press 1972, 75, 89). He was the Sectional Editor (Gastroenterology) for API Text book of Medicine (1969, 72, 79, 86, 92). He published about 150 publications and the earliest were on gastric secretion with Ivy (1949) and Grossman MI (1951). He was Hon. Gastroenterologist and Head at TN Medical college and BYL Nair Ch. Hospital, for about 20 years and Tata Memorial Hospital, Parsee General Hospital for about 30 years. He was consulting Physician at Radiation Medicine Centre, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, since its inception. On his retirement, no farewell functions were held at any institute, as he would never agree to it.

In recognition of his extensive experience in UK and USA, Dr. Antia was offered a post in departments of Gastroenterology in USA but decided to return, to develop the speciality of gastroenterology in India, which became his life’s mission. With a donation of Rs 5000/= (Rupees Five Thousand Only.) from Pai family, obtained by a physician Dr S S Rao, he started the first separate department of Gastroenterology at B Y L Nair Charitable Hospital in 1954. Later on, this department received Shakuntala Amrichand Prize (ICMR) (1973), Pfizer Amrichand Trophy (ISG) (1978), for outstanding research work and gained recognition for DM and DNB degrees (1986). One incident of 1963, when I was his non-resident registrar, needs to be mentioned. An IVP was to be performed on me by his radiologist friend at 6.00 a.m. The radiologist and I reached at 6.00 a.m., but Dr. Antia had reached there 5 minutes earlier, waiting outside the radiologist’s office. He was a strict disciplinarian, with a serious exterior but was a large hearted human being, with an abundant subtle sense of humour. Dr Antia’s determination to develop speciality of gastroenterology on returning to India, his far sighted vision to start the first separate department of gastroenterology in Mumbai, his development of subspeciality such as hepatology, endoscopy, his contribution in training young gastroenterologists, his research activities, the editorship of the journal of ISG and publishing his book on dietetics, provides ample proof of his unparalleled contribution to the speciality of gastroenterology.

Though Dr. Antia is no more with us, Antia’s era will not end on 19 October,2003. Several gastroenterologists from India, who have come in contact with this great gastroenterologists and a fine, wonderful, unconventional human being, will continue to follow the path shown by him. Dr. Antia’s rich legacy of hardwork, honesty, humour, helping others and hating hypocrisy will remain amongst us for a long - long time.

Good bye my respected Guru.

Mumbai, October 31, 2003

HG Desai