

Medicine Man

Madhav Bhardwaj interviewed Dr MC Mishra the Director of AIIMS, New Delhi.

Madhav Bharadwaj (MDB): Despite great advancements made in medical research, how much do we really know about the complexities of human body(especially the mind), its ailment, diseases, remedies? And how much remains to be discovered?

Dr MC Mishra (MCM): There is a plethora of knowledge about anatomy, physiology, pharmacological and pathological aspects of brain and other parts of the human body. However, there is still a large gap that exists between what we know and what we do not know. We still do not quite understand why things happen the way they do in some humans and why they do not happen in others. That is the reason why cure for many diseases is still not in sight, particularly regeneration of organs like brain, heart, kidneys and other organs. As you have rightly said, great advancements have been made in the understanding of the human body that is extremely complex. I think extensive research is going on to understand the molecular basis of diseases and their cure; which we also call "genetic basis" of diseases and genetic engineering to cure these ailments. I would say we still know little and there is a lot that needs to be discovered.

MDB: Where does India stand globally in terms of complicated medical knowledge, treatment, facilities, technological advancement, experience and expertise of medicinal professionals? Which ones will you rate as the top five Indian hospitals? Where does AIIMS figure overall, especially for cancer?


MCM: India is not far behind in today's world with regards to medical knowledge and modern treatments of various medical and surgical diseases including cancer. On the other hand, it is also true that most of the treatment algorithms and protocols have been devised in developed countries. We are abreast with various technological advancements and there exists medical and surgical expertise in the country to the same level, or maybe even better in many areas of medical and surgical problems. However, we still lack the individualistic target to reach each and every patient with the same compassion. The research and treatment for rarer genetic diseases is an expensive proposition since most treatment modalities are imported. If you talk of five teaching medical institutions in India, AIIMS, New Delhi is top ranked and has been occupying the number one position for the past fourteen years. If you talk of hospital and patient care services, AIIMS is one of the three top ranked hospitals, rated by an independent agency for providing quality tertiary care at a very low cost with results at par with those in developed countries. Other two hospitals were in Bangkok and the third I don't remember. That would include cancer also. If you insist that I name other four hospitals in the country, it would be very difficult since most hospitals do not have all the specialties and services at par with AIIMS. X hospital might be doing excellent work in one area, for example cardiology and cardiac surgery, another might be specializing in liver related ailments, but to match AIIMS would be extremely tough since AIIMS also provides teaching and training which most hospitals do not. To see the top ranking medical schools, you might like to refer to the India Today Survey published recently.


MDB: What is the general profile of patients at AIIMS- other than the politicians, is it essentially the poor and middle class that is coming? Is it attracting patients primarily from the surrounding states, or pan-India?

MCM: At AIIMS we provide consultations to 2.8 million patients every year and perform 1,50,000 major operative procedures across all specialties. We have 52 departments providing latest state of the art treatment for most medical and surgical disorders. 50% patients that come to AIIMS are from various states - UP tops the list, then Bihar, and other states and PAN India and even neighboring countries (SAARC).

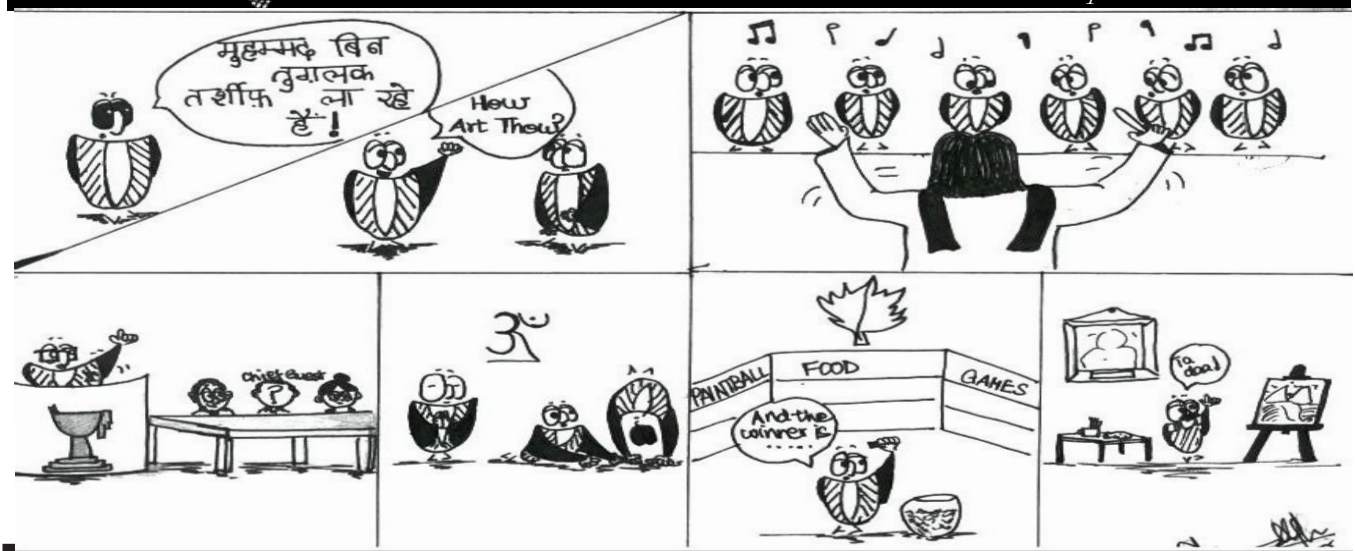
MDB: One of the decisions you have taken since assuming your new office is to provide free generic

(Contd. on page 3)

 Regulars	
<h2>ART COLOURS</h2> <p>The following boys have been awarded Art Colours: Fatch Partap Singh Phoolka Digvijay Gupta, Amartya Tirtha Bhowmick (Re-Awarded) Congratulations!</p>	<h2>The Week Gone By</h2> <p>Yuvan Kumar You would expect the week after mid-terms to allow some catching of breath. However, that has not been the case in school in the last ten odd days. From painting the bricks and pruning of hedges, to practising dialogues and scenes, it's all happening! The musicians at the music department are working harder than ever to produce a grand performance for Founder's this year. They are running on a tight schedule, but as always, we are sure to be in for a treat! The same goes for the Hindi and English plays, rehearsing for hours on end to stage a flawless act. Practice makes perfect! The tireless striving does not end here, for many athletes have been seen practising on the Main Field daily. There are a lot of promising athletes in all houses and the hard work will surely not go waste. Marching too, is being carried out with utmost discipline and rigour. We salute you! The table tennis team is back from the National's camp, having dislodged some of their opponents. Well done!</p>
<h2>FOOTBALL</h2> <p>The School Football Team participated in the IPSC Under-19 Football Tournament held at Mann Public School, Delhi. The team reached the Quarter-Finals where they lost to Pinegrove School 1-0. Well Tried!</p>	<p>While you read this, many boys (including myself) will be undergoing intensive testing- the SAT. Since it is a requisite for all applying to the USA, we hope this attempt proves beneficial for all. With the festive season doing its number here and there, we have had a few holidays in the last week. Accepted with grace, of course! Everyone is reminded to be up to speed with their classwork; this will prove to be vital in the weeks to come.</p>
<h2>MUSIC</h2> <p>Following were the winners of their individual categories in the Inter-House Music Competition, 2014: Piano: Yuvraj Nathani (Hyderabad) Drums: Tushaar Sharma (Jaipur) Hindustani Instrumental: Smrithi Nair (Kashmir) Tabla: Aditya Gupta/ Vrindam Nagpal (Oberoi) Hindustani Vocal: Suyash Raj Shivam (Jaipur) Choir: Hyderabad</p> <p>The house positions are as follows: 1st: Oberoi 2nd: Hyderabad 3rd: Kashmir 4th: Jaipur 5th: Tata Well done!</p>	<h2>AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 WORDS</h2> <p>Patrick Modiano has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Approximately 19 people were killed in ceasefire violations along the Line-of-Control in Kashmir. Mexico was struck by a 6.2 magnitude earthquake while a Spanish nurse has contracted Ebola, marking its spread into Europe. At least 40 people were killed in a suicide bombing attack in Yemen's capital Sanaa. Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Jayalalithaa has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking bail on her recent prison sentence.</p>
<h2>CHESS</h2> <p>The School Chess Team comprising Sarthak Gupta, Anuman Goel, Atharva Shukla and Amritansh Saraf participated in the Delhi Chess Challenge and International FIDE Rating Tournament held from the 1st to 5th of October. In the individual category, Sarthak Gupta stood 13th. The school was ranked 2nd overall in the tournament. Congratulations!</p>	



Founders, 2014
Anirudh Popli



medicines to your OPD patients. While this will prove to be a big boon to many patients, what bothers some others is the malaise of fake medicines, and the 'over-indulgence' (commercialization) by many doctors in private set-ups. Can this not be effectively checked?

MCM: To bring down the cost of treatment and medications, we need to prescribe generic brands wherever possible, because tertiary care is the major cause of rural and urban indebtedness in our country. However, you have rightly pointed out that the commercialization of medicare and spurious drugs is a big menace. It might be possible to check this menace by strictly adhering to a code of medical ethics and those found violating the law must get punished, which unfortunately is a tedious and time consuming legal process and most culprits might be getting scot free due to lack of enough evidence.

MDB: On the other hand, in AIIMS, like in all government medical establishments, patients and their attendants often have to deal with insensitive doctors and the high-headedness of the para-medical and even menial staff. Is it a Herculean task to overcome this tendency?

MCM: Hospitals are also part of the overall societal norms that exist in many other spheres of life in India. Compassion and a sense of responsibility are immensely important when dealing with public. Communication skills are a serious issue in most places where there is tremendous public interface. We are consciously addressing this issue. If you go by the feedback that we receive from the patients who have undergone treatment at AIIMS; there is a high degree of satisfaction (85% Excellent and 12% Very good, which leaves a small percentage with either unsatisfied or fair). These communication skills are being taught to all our staff i.e. doctors, nurses and other paramedical workers. It has something to do with ever increasing volume of patients with limited number of resources, both human as well as material. We used to talk about population explosion 30 years ago, it has happened now. We plan the system for say 4000 patients but if the number doubles then naturally there are going to be deficiencies.

The Nonchalance of Death

Interpreting War Literature and Its Roots

Anvay Grover

While going through some reading material for my English class, I was truly struck by one quote that I read. For the benefit of this piece and those reading it, I feel it is best to share this quotation by Chinua Achebe:

"This is a fact- and worries me-if you see too much death, then death begins to lose some of its reverence, or whatever it is"

What made this sentence truly poignant is the matter-of-fact tone that it carries. However the reason I stopped to re-read it was because Achebe's sentiment was familiar to me. My conscience felt guilty, and I felt as though I too was one of the people who had forgotten this reverence, "or whatever it is", of death.

Reading this, I was reminded of an older piece of literature, one that does not really share the same context- "*Hollow Men*" by T.S. Eliot. This poem is primarily concerned with the empty nature of human beings, and talks about how men fail to realize what is happening around them. In the poem, Eliot refers to the lack of soul in men, how they have become used to seeing damage and death all around. Examining the background of both Achebe and Eliot reveals the reasons for the similar sentiment being voiced by them. Eliot wrote this poem in the aftermath of World War 1, and though many critics believe that his failed marriage played a role in his writing, it is also widely acknowledged that destruction brought about by war was one of Eliot's motivations in writing the poem. Similarly, Achebe lived through the Biafran War, when Nigeria was torn apart because of civil war. Most of his writing, including his most famous novel *Things Fall Apart*, draws its inspiration from what he witnessed and experienced in this time.

It is through these two examples, one sees the dehumanizing effect that atrocities have on a human's character. Both Achebe and Eliot were profoundly affected by the wars they witnessed, and saw the sheer lifelessness of the soldiers and people fighting the war. Death became so commonplace that they stopped ringing an alarm in people's minds, as they usually should. Psychologically, such atrocities became a regular part of people's lives. Death could no longer shake them, and this is what prompted so much war literature after the world wars; people realized that the life they had been living was inhuman.

Earlier on, I said that I felt guilty about forgetting the meaning of death. This sentiment expressed by Achebe and Elliot felt familiar to me because I can see it today as well. Whenever I flip through the first few pages of any newspaper, I see reports of rape in rural as well as urban areas of India, murder, child molestation etc. But it fails to ring an alarm in my head, all of it fails to make me react the way I should, because I see it each day in every newspaper. All the issues that I mentioned in the previous sentence have become so enmeshed in the India that we know that we fail to react to any such reports of it in the newspaper. And because we fail to take notice of such things, we fail to identify the problems in our society. However, until we identify the problem, it is impossible for us to solve it, and therein lies one of our fundamental conundrums.

Social Service Midterms

Smrithi Nair *reports on the social service midterms which took place in Rudraprayag.*

On the 24th of September, three faculty members, MCJ, RBM and MGP accompanied five of us, Amal Agarwal, Abhayraj Jain, Nalini Malaviya, Vallavi Shukla and I, to the disaster stricken school in Chaka, near Rudraprayag. The school had suffered great damage due to the floods of last year. Its foundations were weakened and the school was deemed unfit for further usage. The students and the entire staff were displaced from the previous location and were shifted to one that is situated much higher on the hills.

With help of generous donations from various organisations the school functioned under a tin roof propped by make shift rods and tents. This, for the time being, seemed more than enough and gave Mr Om Prakash Baijwal enough hope to run an entire school. Mr Om Prakash Baijwal, the current headmaster of the school, did the unthinkable. Despite the floods nearly washing away the school, and threatening to hinder the education of the youth of the village of Chaka, his faith did not so much as waver. He did everything in his power to get help, despite obstacles. It was in his strength and rock solid determination that the people of the village found hope, so much so that the villagers gave their land away to the school. Under the tents, it often becomes very hot in the afternoons, but heat doesn't seem to bother the students at all, they seem extremely grateful and simply happy to be there, to have gotten the opportunity to still be studying even after such devastating events.

This was the third time that Doscovs visited the site. This time we ventured out to do something a little different: making a short film. The film, shot at the site, features interviews of the students who have endured the floods. We recorded these interviews in the hope that their message will be conveyed to the rest of the country. These stories have provided us with a deep amount of insight into the lives of the villagers after the calamity. It was truly an enlightening experience.

Apart from the short film, we helped build blocks for the new building of the school. It was an experience unlike any other, sitting on the banks of river Mandakini on a warm, sunny afternoon and helping in the building of a structure of learning, knowledge and a better future for the youth of the village. We finished our work there and had managed to make 83 blocks of mortar for the new school in just three hours. Perhaps we didn't fully understand the enormity or

the importance of what we were doing, but we sure did have a lot of fun!

On our last day, we were requested to attend the students' 'baal sabha'. Despite having received only a couple of minutes to prepare, the students put up exciting and truly commendable performances of singing, dancing and elocution. They even threw in a little number in kavaali. Encouraged by their enthusiasm, we sang for them 'Lab Pe Aati' at the end of the session.

So, with smiling faces, sparkling eyes and the words of Lab Pe Aati echoing in the hills we made our final way back home; our hearts filled with joy, and most of all, hope.

In closing, I'd just like to add that we are all so grateful for this opportunity. This trip turned out to be better than what any of us had in mind. All in all, the experience was amazing; we got to learn a great deal in these five days. From water fights to random sand fights, from photobombing unintentionally to taking a huge load of totally unnecessary but brilliant pictures (not to mention a lot of them were selfies!), from screaming in absolute terror to laughing in utter dull-witted joy (shortly followed by sudden mood swings), this trip has been exhilarating.

Lastly, we wish the very best to Mr Baijwal and his team of superheroes.

SHARE A SMILE

Parth Khanna

'Share a Smile' is a new social service project that allows students to use the money they get to celebrate their birthdays inside school with the children that attend classes at the Panchayat Ghar. Even though it is not one of the conventional social service projects that run in the School and doesn't directly help the society, it spreads a smile which is its primary aim. It is meant to strengthen the bonds among all those that share these sixty-nine acres with us. What might just be a few moments of joy for us as we eat a pizza from our form-mate's birthday money might actually mean a lot more to the children in Panchayat Ghar as they aren't as privileged as we are. By just sharing our parties with these people, we are sharing more than our money and cakes and pizzas because, essentially, we're sharing our smile with them.

We have already held one birthday party under this project at the Panchayat Ghar with the support of six D Formers. The money saved from this 'treat' has been credited to the Panchayat Ghar Fund and may be used by the students of the same. We would look forward to celebrating more birthdays in the Panchayat Ghar and everybody is welcome to contribute.

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