

OBITUARY

Dr Panna Choudhury (1947-2015)



Our beloved, Dr. Panna Choudhury breathed his last on September 1, 2015 at New Delhi. Born on April 1, 1947 at Assam, he obtained MBBS (1968) and Diploma in Child Health (1971) from Dibrugarh University, and then completed his MD (Pediatrics) from Delhi University in 1974. He worked in various capacities at Lok Nayak Hospital, Delhi; Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi; and JIPMER, Pondicherry; before finally superannuating as Consultant Pediatrician from Lok Nayak Hospital, New Delhi in 2009.

Dr. Panna Choudhury, an accomplished academician, had devoted his most productive life span in the service of Indian Academy of Pediatrics. After serving the Editorial Board of Indian Pediatrics in various capacities for two decades, he assumed charge as Editor-in-Chief (2002 to 2007). During his tenure, the journal scaled greater heights including getting indexed in Science Citation Index Expanded, which paved the way for obtaining its first Impact factor. He was elected as the Secretary and President of IAP (Delhi), and subsequently became the National President of IAP in 2009. Even later, he continued to guide the Academy in various positions including as Chairman of IAP Committee on Immunization (2008-2011), Chairperson of the national Newborn Resuscitation Program (NRP) under IAP (since 2009; aimed at improving child survival), and IAP National President's Special Representative. Other noteworthy assignments included National Convener of Indian Academy of Pediatrics 'Under 5 Child Survival Intervention Program' (2007), Chairperson and Secretary of Nutrition subchapter of Indian Academy of Pediatrics, Editor of the Bulletin of the Nutrition subchapter 'Nutrisearch', and Convener of IAP Task Force for framing Guidelines for Management of Diarrhea and IAP Task Force for Hospital Management of Severely Malnourished Children.

Dr. Panna Choudhury was a founder member and the Vice-Chairman of Child Health Foundation – an organization established for the promotion of child survival, child health and child development. He served as an Advisor/Expert/Investigator for many organizations including WHO, UNICEF, INCLIN, Asia Pacific Pediatric Association, Emory University, ICMR, Journal of Pediatrics, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Government of India. He was a certified Master Trainer for 'Helping Babies Breathe' course by American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Choudhury was visiting Faculty at John Hopkins School of Public Health, Children's Hospital of Michigan, and St. Mary's Hospital, London. He had about 100 publications in reputed journals and co-edited many popular books notably 'Principles of Pediatric and Neonatal Emergencies', 'Nutrition in Children: Developing Country Concerns', 'Frontiers in Pediatrics', 'Pediatric Drug Companion', IAP Text Book of Pediatrics and Guidebook of IAP Committee on Immunization. Dr. Panna Choudhury had been conferred with fellowships of IAP, National Academy of Medical Sciences, and Royal College of Tropical Medicine and Child Health.

Dr. Choudhury was an astute clinician. Above all, his humane qualities were noteworthy – he had a smiling and a gentle disposition, was ever ready to help those in need, and could settle disputes when no ready solutions were in sight. He always kept national interest in the forefront while advocating and working for the survival and betterment of the children of the country.

Dr. Choudhury is survived by his wife (Prof. Monisha Choudhury), two daughters (Pallavi, Surabhi), and three grandchildren. He has left behind a void, which would be difficult to fill. May his soul rest in peace.