

Leading the Journal to Silver Jubilee and Beyond: Dr RN Srivastava as the Editor From 1985 to 1990

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Dr RN Srivastava was the editor of the journal for 2 terms from 1985- February 1990; during this period nearly 1300 articles were published in the journal. In his first editorial titled 'Literature Pollution', he dwelled upon the various reasons for the phenomenal increase in the medical publications [1]. He reiterated that the aim of *Indian Pediatrics* was to publish the best of the investigative work in the various fields of pediatrics being done in the country. To improve the quality of the journal, he suggested that the members of the IAP submit at least some of their better articles to their own journal. He concluded "The Journal has clear objectives. It is primarily responsible to the members of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics, but it must also project a good image of this country. If we do not succeed in our goals, we will be merely adding to the literature pollution."

The presidential address at the XXII National conference of the IAP by Dr SK Bhargava highlighted the need for review and a major revamp of the MCH programs to achieve a more rapid improvement in child health [2]. The major areas that needed improvement were identified as antenatal and neonatal care, immunization, nutritional services, and care of the girl child. He also highlighted the role of the government in promoting rational drug therapy. The need for focussing on the community in addition to the hospitals was highlighted.

The important articles in 1985 focussed on immunization, nutrition and infectious diseases. The editorial by Dr T Jacob John defined the role of the IAP in the Expanded Program of Immunization [3]. Meningococcal disease was reviewed comprehensively [4]. In an interesting letter, Dr KN Agarwal built a strong case for inclusion of the medical subjects in the civil services examination so as to give a chance to medical professionals to take up civil services as a career [5].

An excellent editorial on 'The Girl Child' and a comprehensive review 'Discrimination begins at birth', both by Dr Shanti Ghosh, marked the first issue in 1986

[6, 7]. The subject of immune system in malnutrition was comprehensively reviewed [8]. The importance of iodine deficiency disorders, their impact on human development and the preventive strategies were discussed by the pioneers in the field [9, 10]. An editorial by Dr SK Mittal highlighted the need for oral rehydration salt solution that could be used in all aspects of managing childhood diarrhea [11]. He highlighted the need for a lower osmolarity ORS with a lower sodium content.

In the editorial in October 1986, Dr Srivastava discussed the pediatric care and critically analysed the role of the Academy in promoting the welfare of children [12]. He expressed distress at the failure of the Academy to make a significant impact on advancing the discipline of Pediatrics. He suggested that "The IAP and its members should spearhead a movement for the care and welfare of children." He appealed for the advancements in all aspects of pediatrics including education and research. The need for the pediatricians to be the spokespersons for the children was highlighted.

Another highlight of the journal was to publish the abstracts of the papers accepted for National conference in the regular issues. This practice has now been given up due to much larger numbers of submissions now. The year also carried one of the 2 parts of special issues on Neonatology edited by Dr Bhakoo; this included comprehensive reviews on neonatal fluid therapy, neonatal infection and mother's role [13]. A supplement containing review articles on various emergencies and poisonings was published in October 1986.

In the presidential address, Dr Sundaravalli highlighted the necessity for changing the medical curriculum as had been done by many countries [14]. The questions raised are pertinent even today as no major changes in curriculum have been implemented in the country except that Pediatrics is a separate subject now.

In 1987, the Academy issued the instructions and guidelines for the formation of subspecialty chapters. Dr

Srivastava discussed the need for the development of these subspecialties in the country and the need for balance between social, preventive, and community pediatrics and advancement of care of a sick child [15]. He expressed his concern regarding the harm to the image of pediatricians caused by the lack of subspecialties. The way forward was also suggested. Unfortunately, nearly three decades later there are only a few institutions with well-developed pediatric subspecialties.

The presidential address at the XXIV National conference by Dr AB Desai 'diverted from the usual pattern of making a statement of activities, policies, and perspectives related to Pediatrics, undertaken at national and international level by governmental and various bodies.' He stressed upon what the Academy had done and had scope to do [16].

The Journal entered its 25th year in 1988. The circulation then was 4200. In the editorial in the January issue, the objectives were re-emphasized [17]. The paucity of funds for the journal and the resulting dependence on advertisements was discussed. To improve the quality of submissions, a checklist was published in the issue. The January issue contained a reproduction from the January 1964 issue of the journal giving the memorandum of the Academy and the names of the members of the first executive board. The issue also carried an excellent account of the history of the Academy by Dr Udani [18]. The issue carried articles on the development of pediatrics in various regions in the country [19-22]. The August issue carried a special article on Institute of Child Health, Calcutta which elaborated not just about the institute but also about the history of Pediatrics in India [23].

Rohde and Northrup projected 'Diarrhea as a nutritional disease' in their brilliant article which discussed the impact of poor nutrition on diarrheal mortality and the possible strategies to prevent these [24]. Another article highlighted the use of anthropometry to identify children with a high risk of dying [25]; the authors suggested that frequent measurements of MUAC seem to be the most effective approach for identifying children with a high risk of dying. The recommendations of the WHO/SEAR sponsored National seminar on Rational Drug therapy in pediatric practice in January 1988 were published in November 1988 issue [26]; these covered the role of health care professionals, institutions and industry to promote rational drug therapy in pediatric practice. A special supplement was published in October 1988 on neonatal care focussing on emergencies [27]. This issue also had articles on neurosurgical emergencies, hypertensive emergency and acute renal failure.

The silver jubilee presidential address by Dr Benakappa highlighted the development of 10 subspecialty chapters of the Academy [28]. The need for modification of curriculum of medical colleges and need for improvements in various aspects of child health were discussed. A humble request was made to some of the professors to devote a part of their time for research to ensure professional advancement.

The journal during the period carried nearly 70 comprehensive reviews; these included state-of-the-art reviews, clinical practice guidelines, and drug reviews. Few of the important ones are cited here [29-33].

The last issue edited by Dr Srivastava was of February 1990, thereafter, Dr RK Puri took over. Wait for the next issue ... to continue the journey.

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