Professor Savitri Shrivastava

1935-2022

Professor (Dr.) Savitri Shrivastava, a pioneer pediatric cardiologist, passed away on the 20th of June 2022, after a long-term illness. She contributed to the growth of pediatric cardiology in all spheres, and was a hero for many established and budding pediatric cardiologists across the globe.

She was born on 1st July, 1935 in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh where her father was a famous clinician. She followed the tradition of the family and did graduation and post-graduation (Medicine) from GR Medical College, Gwalior; she joined Army Medical Corps initially. She then got the opportunity to do DM in cardiology (AIIMS-1971) and fellowship at the prestigious University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, USA (1975-76). She was entrusted with the responsibility to establish the clinic for pediatric cardiology at AIIMS.

She carried forward the legacy of applying clinical methods, just like her mentor late Professor R. Tandon, and also successfully adopted contemporary noninvasive and invasive procedures. As a teacher, her grasp on the trivet of bedside clinical methods, chest roentgenogram, and electrocardiogram was praiseworthy and exceptional. She was privy to technically evolving echocardiography and she adapted quickly to fetal echo imaging. However, it was the time when cath-intervention procedures like valvuloplastys and percutaneous device closures were about to revolutionize the life of a huge number of patients. India was brilliantly placed in the timeline of history due to her leadership, when the world’s first balloon mitral valvuloplasty was done, as the collaborative Indo-US project, in AIIMS Delhi as early as 1984-85 by a team comprised of JE Lock (Boston, Massachusetts), Dr. Savitri Shrivastava and Dr. Khalilullah. It changed the lives of millions of patients suffering from rheumatic heart disease across the world.

She was instrumental in creating three highly acclaimed tertiary care centers for pediatric cardiology (AIIMS, Delhi; SGPGI, Lucknow, and Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Delhi) and cultivated at least two generations of pediatric cardiologists who became pillars of programs across India and abroad. She was engaged in multiple basic research projects and won multiple medals and awards for her papers. Logical and restrained by nature, she never overtly displayed her emotions but her ethics, clinical excellence, and command of the subject always won the confidence of colleagues and patients’ families.

She was married to her passion for children suffering from heart defects, and therefore her legacy includes all those children who could be treated and those clinicians who followed in her footsteps professionally, ethically and spiritually.