

Reaching the Heights:

The Journal During the Editorship of Dr R K Puri (March 1990-1994)

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Let me continue the journey of Indian Pediatrics further between March 1990-1994. Dr RK Puri, Professor and Head, Pediatrics, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi took over the reins of Indian Pediatrics from Dr RN Srivastava. Dr. Puri was completely new to the editorial board of Indian Pediatrics. As a member of his editorial team, I was impressed by his dedication to the journal and continuous attempt to improve its quality. In his very first communication 'From the Editors Desk' in March 1990 issue, Dr Puri emphasized the need of *Medical Education* and started a new Section of Continuing Medical Education (CME) in the journal [1]. He also mentioned his plans to organize workshops for the benefit of post graduate students and junior members of the faculty.

YEAR 1990

The journal published an interesting article in May issue on prenatal diagnosis of chromosomal disorders in amniotic fluid [2]. A special article for the first time assessed the manpower requirement specially focusing on pediatric population for various health facilities to achieve Health for All by 2000 AD [3]. The August issue published first article on HIV infection in the pediatric age group which mentioned that no case of pediatric AIDS has been reported from India, a problem which is now seen commonly. This article aimed at enlightening the health personnel about this disease and mentioned WHO case definition for AIDS and CDC classification of HIV infection in children [4]. Presidential address by Dr SC Arya during IAP National Conference at Bangalore, published in July issue highlighted the need for a standard uniform ORS formula, need for the special care of Girl Child in the "Year of the Girl Child" and need for determining proper age of starting schooling in children [5]. Subsequent to this, September issue published proceedings of a seminar on recommendations for the proper composition of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) and another article in December issue on optimal content of ORS with reduced sodium and low osmolarity [6]. This

also formed the basis of presently available low osmolarity WHO ORS.

In the pursuit of his interest in medical education, Dr Puri proposed to add two new sections of 'Viewpoint' and 'Medical Education' from the coming year for the benefit of young pediatricians.

YEAR 1991

The journal focused on pediatric subspecialty topics and included renal problems (January), cardiac problems (February) and growth and development (March). The March issue also had an important editorial on advantages of indigenous weaning food technologies over imported ones [7]. In the same issue there is an appeal and a proforma for "Vaccine Preventable Disease Surveillance" by Chairperson of IAP Committee on Immunization, a task which is akin to the current IDSurv program of IAP being pursued so vigorously. The April issue focused on multi drug resistant typhoid fever, a problem still to be solved. May issue had an article on drugs used in the treatment of childhood psychiatric disorders, an important topic but published rarely. With this issue the journal also started another new column of "Selected Abstracts" which presented selective but important material published in some other journals mostly the foreign journals. June issue of the journal focused on poliomyelitis with an editorial by RN Basu and adverse events following immunization (AEFI) by Jotna Sokhey. Polio eradication was mentioned for the first time which has now become a reality. A detailed plan of various activities and strategies to achieve polio eradication were specified [8,9]. Baroda Development Screening Test [10] and Trivandrum Developmental Screening Chart (TDSC) were also published in this issue. Editor's Desk highlighted the achievements of Indian Pediatrics which was rated to be amongst the Four Best in the country by an ICMR survey which took into account the scientific content, print quality, regularity, indexing, circulation, etc. The International standing of

Indian Pediatrics also showed a perceptible improvement. December issue carried an editorial on National Child Health Policies and Recommendations of IAP-IPA-WHO-UNICEF workshop on strategies and approaches for women's health, child health and family planning for the decade of nineties which outlined the road map for priorities in this area for the next ten years [11].

An advertisement featuring Dr. Arvind Taneja for computerization of medical records was published, an idea about what was there in store in future and now it has become a common phenomenon. Till now, advertisements of Infant Milk Food (IMF) products appeared in various issues of the journal, a practice which is now prohibited by law. A notable change was appearance of color advertisements in the journal.

YEAR 1992

In his first message, the editor had put proposal to add 3 new sections on Medical Education, Epidemiology, and National Health Services in the forthcoming issues. An article in February issue on computer programs in pediatrics highlighted use of computers in many medical fields like literature search, clinical data management, fetal and neonatal monitoring, medical imaging, pediatric education etc. An interesting article in CME section "Do exclusively breast fed infants need fluid supplementation" adequately emphasizes the fact that exclusively breast fed healthy infants do not need supplemental fluids to maintain water homeostasis [12]. Supplementation in the form of water and tea in early infancy is associated with risks of increased diarrheal morbidity and mortality and premature termination of breastfeeding. The June issue had an Editorial 'Undergraduate Pediatrics Education in India' in which Dr Indra Bhargava had emphasized the need for up grading of the status of Pediatrics to a major subject in the UG curriculum [13] which has now become a reality. July issue editorial by Dr S Ghosh emphasized that time has come when we must focus our attention on our youth specially the young girls. From September issue Editor wanted to start a regular section on Pediatric Surgery in response to an editorial "In search of Recognition" by a Pediatric Surgeon. In the October issue Growth charts prepared by Dr K N Agrawal were published which has been a landmark study. These charts are being used in various research schemes and other studies as Reference Charts [14]. This year the size of the journal increased to accommodate more articles (total 1636 pages with single October issue containing 144 pages) thus giving more authors an opportunity to publish their research work in *Indian Pediatrics*.

YEAR 1993

January issue had an article on "Training of MBBS Final year students in neonatal resuscitation" which emphasized the need of this training in undergraduate curriculum. The same has been now introduced by Govt of India as NRP training for all medical officers to further reduce neonatal mortality to achieve MDG4 Goals. If this is done during MBBS posting, no repeat training will be required. In February issue in Presidential address Dr Meharban Singh informed that "our cherished dream of according Pediatrics the status of an independent discipline in UG medical teaching has been fulfilled with Medical Council of India agreeing to our proposal [15]. A Report of the sub committee for curriculum in Pediatrics for UG medical education was published which formed the basis of uniform theory and clinical teaching and examination system for UG students [16]. May issue had a Special article "Child care in India" by Dr. C Gopalan in which he has described a Child Development Model (of an ascending spiral) that Japan has successfully pursued. However, as far as India is concerned, no significant secular trend was still discernible at least among the poor communities. He also described challenges in Child Health Care in India. Focusing on adolescence, school age and pre school age periods [17]. Article on experience with OSCE as a tool for formative evaluation in Pediatrics was very informative and formed the basis of introducing it in DNB examination by the National Board of Examinations. Highlight of the July issue was "Commendation for Indian Pediatrics" which received the award for the "Best Indian Medical Journal" (*Fig. 1*).

YEAR 1994

January issue emphasized the need for rotavirus vaccine in India, an issue which is still being debated. Later a review article was also published in the same year on this issue. The March issue highlighted the proceedings of 8th Asian Congress held at New Delhi where Chief Guest was President of India Dr SD Sharma. It also featured speeches by Dr RD Potdar, President of APSSEAR and IAP President Dr Uday Bodhankar. In his inaugural address the idea of six months maternity leave for the benefit of exclusive breastfeeding was floated. He also informed that states of Punjab and Haryana had already implemented it and IAP will work hard for its implementation at National Level. He also congratulated the organizing committee to hold such a mega event successfully without any financial support from the infant food industries and thereby setting a global precedent. April issue published physical growth parameters in Indian affluent children by Dr. KN Agarwal – Agarwal charts (Birth - 6 yrs) [18] again a landmark study being quoted widely.

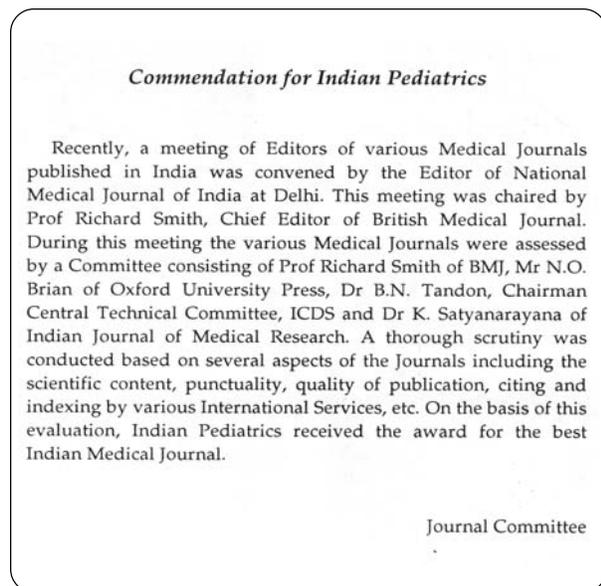


FIG. 1 *Commendation for Indian Pediatrics.*

Overall, the period of Dr R K Puri as an editor can be termed as excellent as during his tenure, the journal introduced many new sections, increased its size without compromising the scientific contents and could reach to the label of being termed as “Best Indian Medical Journal.”

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