

Obituary



Professor M. Natarajan

Orthopaedic fraternity on India has lost a leader and pioneer in the demise of Professor M. Natarajan. His contributions for the rapid advance of the speciality especially in Tamil nadu were immense.

He was born on 18th March 1920 in the hinterland of erstwhile Madras state. After graduating as a B.A, he entered Stanley Medical College, Madras. He had a brilliant academic career winning medals and prizes including University and college Blue ribbons earning the sobriquet, 'Medal' Natarajan.

He joined Armed Forces Medical Service in the dying years of the second World War. On return to Madras Medical Service, he was seconded for training to Orthopaedics in United Kingdom where he proceeded FRCS., England and MCh. Ortho., Liverpool with ease. He had the temerity to point out a mistake in Sir Reginold Watson Jones, 'Fractures and Joint Injuries' receiving the approbation of the author.

On return, he became orthopaedic surgeon Stanley Medical College and Hospital and visiting surgeon Government Tuberculosis sanatorium for few years.

Professor Natarajan's contributions for the Medical Education in general and orthopaedic surgery, Traumatology and Rehabilitation in particular began during his tenure as professor of orthopaedic surgery, Madras Medical College and Government General Hospital, Madras. He was mainly responsible for the holistic development of the speciality with starting of Diploma and Master's Degree comes in Orthopaedics, a school of physiotherapy a school of prosthesis and orthotics, drawing the plan for Government Institute of Rehabilitation and Artificial Limb Centre at Madras and blue print for Accident services for Tamilnadu. He used to say proudly that 'I sit on three stools, Orthopaedics, Physical Medicine and Prosthesis and Orthotics'. Witness the pathetic state of so-called independence of these specialities.

His book for undergraduates has 5 editions since 1982. his collaboration for 'Madras study of Tuberculosis' with MRC of Great Britian and TRC of ICMR, with US Agency for Rehabilitation and WHO have contributed vastly for better management of the common orthopaedic problems of the developing countries.

He was conferred Honorary Fellowship of Royal College of England, Honorary D. Litt of Annamalai University and many more. He was a Founder Member of Indian Orthopaedic Association, World orthopaedic concern and Tamilnadu orthopaedic Association.

He retired as the principal of Madras Medical College and was made the Emeritus professor of orthopaedic surgery of the college.

He was a family man with three of his children qualifying for different

specialities of medicine. He lived to see the election of his eldest son to the highest office of IOA.

I wish the Indian Orthopaedic Association commemorate suitably the memory of Professor M. Natarajan, a teacher- par-excellence, a visionary and an institution builder of the speciality.

TK Shanmugasundaram