



**IAPMR**

# Bulletin

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## **Editorial- A Tribute to Dr Howard A Rusk**

Greetings of the Season and a Happy New Year 2012!

I had been contemplating visiting 'The Rusk Institute' for a very long time. I got the opportunity in June 2011. On 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2011 I visited this centre-Howard A. Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine at New York and paid my tributes to the 'Father of Rehabilitation Medicine'.

Howard A. Rusk was born on April 9, 1901 in Brookfield. Dr. Rusk became a pioneer in the rehabilitation of the physically disabled. Dr. Rusk's wartime work with the disabled was spurred by the anguish he felt, as the officer in charge of the Army Air Force Convalescent Training Program.

Dr. Rusk founded the world's first comprehensive medical-training program in rehabilitation: the Department of Rehabilitation at New York University's medical school. He headed the department from 1946 to 1980. He also founded the World Rehabilitation Fund in 1955. For five decades, Dr. Rusk's passionate concern was, as he put it in an interview, "what happens to severely disabled people after the stitches are out and the fever is down." Then, he said, the crucial task was to "take them back into the best lives they can live with what they have left".

I feel that his autobiography, "A World to Care For" and the book, "Rehabilitation Medicine" should be made an essential book for all PMR related post-graduate training programmes in the country.

Although Dr Rusk passed away at the age of 88 on November 4, 1989, he continues to inspire the generations of professionals in the field.

**Dr. Sanjay Wadhwa**, Professor of PMR, AIIMS, New Delhi and President, Indraprastha Association of Rehabilitation Medicine



**Dr Sanjay Wadhwa  
at the Rusk Institute**

## Strange But True



**Dr B Ramachandran**

After being in the medical profession for more than 30 years I realized that on many occasions my patients had difficulty in understanding the rationale and following my advice. This was not due to their lack of faith in me but because of their wrong and often ill-founded beliefs and ideas about the human body in general and diseases in particular.

Accident victims and specifically head injury cases are a typical example. Years of watching films and TV when the next scene after a car accident is a hospital and the red light blinking on the words “OPERATION THEATRE” has influenced us that many patients complain of inaction of doctors after accidents. The correct treatment which all of us know is observation, avoidance of medication which may alter the patient’s consciousness level and scans, when required. Operations are required or done only in a small percentage of cases where blood clots are detected in the brain or to relieve pressure build up inside the skull.

Next example is treatment of common painful conditions. Pain due to inflammation is very common and medicines commonly prescribed like Brufen and Voveran fall in the category of anti-inflammatory drugs, my patient invariably tells me “Doc I don’t want pain killers”. Then do I wish his pain away? Also pure pain killers- analgesics like Acetaminophen or Ketorolac or opiate derivatives are infrequently prescribed by doctors and anti-inflammatory medicines take care of pain by reducing the inflammation.

Diet prescription is an art, science, and common sense rolled into one. Severe restriction is placed and even dieticians are called in for certain diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, high cholesterol, kidney ailments etc. However, in cases of fever, cough, cold etc. the commonest ailments diet advice is often sought and given more by the doctor’s common sense or what he has learned from his grandmother than from any book! Having the privilege of studying my medicine in south and practicing in the north, I observed tendency of doctors in North advising against Rice and curds and those in the south against wheat while advising Rice with curd. Food allergies are known and a food known to cause a specific problem is to be avoided but blanket ban due to bias handed over from one generation to the next is to be avoided by us, the Physicians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Rest in heart diseases and after heart attacks is again full of misconceived notions. The modern day treatment of heart attacks consists of allowing the patient to do bedside activities as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after the attack. Exercising to the limit of tolerance or the level allowed by the results of a treadmill test is necessary to regain health. Ill effects of prolonged rest are

many. So the next time you visit a friend who is recovering from an illness, ask him out for a walk!

Another myth is that allopathic medicines are “hot”. Many patients take 2 capsules when prescribed 4, in the belief that it is too hot for their system to handle. A common practice is to discuss the ailment and the treatment with a well-meaning friend, a neighbour, the *panwallah* and the *dhobi*. Now each well-meaning soul has his own view based on his personal experience and gives our patient a harrowing tale. Thus, after paying for an expert opinion the *panwallah*'s advice prevails, the patient does not become alright due to taking only half the dose, disease has become resistant to that medicine and stronger medicines are required.

The other extreme is the net savvy patient who rattles off 12 reasons for his raised alkaline phosphatase levels or the one who is unduly concerned about some abnormal biochemical parameter which is not relevant to the problem at hand. Our duty to our patient should include some time in communication and education so that we can dispel his myths and help him make the most of our medical advice.

**Dr. B Ramachandran**, Practising Psychiatrist, New Delhi and  
Honorary Secretary, IAPMR

### **World Report on Disability launched**

At a very impressive ceremony on 9 June, 2011 at the UN Head Quarters, New York the World Report on Disability was launched. A particular highlight of the ceremony was a video address by Professor Stephen Hawking, the world famous theoretical physicist. I was fortunate to attend this global launch and represent India at this important international event.

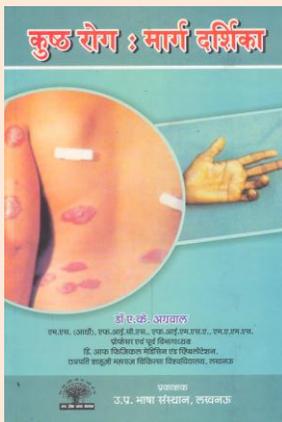
**Dr. Sanjay Wadhwa**

Dear Prof. Wadhwa,

You will be happy to know that my book, ‘Kusht Rog- Marg Darshika’ i.e. ‘Leprosy Guidelines’ has been published by UP Bhasha Sansthan, Lucknow and has been released by Prof. DK Gupta, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, CSM Medical University, Lucknow on 20th May, 2011. This book is written in Hindi language and has a large number of photographs.

With warm regards

**Prof. A K Agarwal**, Dept. of PMR, CSM Medical University, Lucknow





Dear Dr Wadhwa,

I am delighted to share this bit of info and photos.

We have 23 physiatrists who have qualified in MD (PMR). This May 2011, the Vice Chancellor of the TN Dr MGR Med Univ. Dr Mayilvahanan Natrajan, MCh Ortho PhD, conducted an MD exam (4 papers+ Viva) for those with 3 yr Diploma Phys Med and those with D Phys Med and DNB (PMR) (4 yrs PMR). Dr George Joseph, Dr Suranjan Bhattacharjee, Dr Mohandas Kurup and Dr Govardhan were the examiners. 29 candidates appeared and 23 were successful. It was amazing to see Physiatrists of various ages take the exam. and the camaraderie was visible. It is only in PMR one can see different generations of doctors communicate with such fervor -for a common cause - MD PMR.



**Dr Uma Pandiyan**

**For the First Time:**

The Government of India has appointed Mr Prasanna Kumar Pincha as the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. It is for the first time ever that a person with disability has been appointed as the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in the country. He has assumed charge with effect from December 28, 2011. Mr Pincha, a visually-challenged person, is a law graduate with a Masters' degree in English literature, has been a disability rights activist, served as founder principal of Government Institute for the Blind in Jorhat, Assam, worked as a Joint Director in Social Welfare Department of Assam Government and was a Special Rapporteur with National Human Rights Commission. He was selected for the National Award for Best Employee (Visually Disabled) in 1999 by the Central Government.



I extend my heartiest Greetings and Congratulations!

**Dr Sanjay Wadhwa**

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