Professor Subrat Acharya takes over as President of the Indian Society of Gastroenterology this year. It is not just his academic eminence that has brought him to this prestigious position but also his vast experience, immense wisdom, brilliant ideas and vision. He fully deserves this position. Only a person of his stature can uphold the honor, values and scientific temper of this important society.

I have known Subrat for 26 years, since we both joined the DM course in Gastroenterology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, as batch-mates way back in 1980. During our training all of us recognized his multi-talented skills and abilities, both academic and organizational. In those days he was known to work long, rigorous hours seemingly tirelessly – a trait that is still his hallmark. His in-depth analysis of patients’ problems, his precise, logical and well-thought-out arguments in favor of his diagnosis, his sharp, alert and astute thinking, and the intensity and passion that he brought to his work are worth emulating even today. No wonder he heads one of the best departments of Gastroenterology in the country, at the AIIMS.

Subrat was born November 1, 1951. He graduated from MKCG Medical College, Behrampur in 1974, where he was honored as the “Best Outgoing Student.” He completed his doctorate from the AIIMS in 1982 and joined the faculty as Lecturer at SCB Medical College, Cuttack and then at the AIIMS in 1986. He rose to head the department at the AIIMS in 2004.

Over the years, Subrat has achieved many awards and positions in recognition of his excellent scientific and professional contributions. He has been honored with the Mitra Olympus Endoscopy Award, Samata Chandra Shekhar Award, P N Berry Award, Commonwealth Medical Fellowship Award, Om Prakash Memorial Award, and the Best Young Investigator Award by the Asia-Pacific Association for Study of the Liver (APASL), to name a few. He is also a Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad, and the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, the Past President of the Indian Association for Study of the Liver, and Honorary Consultant-cum-Advisor to the Armed Forces Medical Services. He is Editor of Tropical Gastroenterology since 1993 and an editor at the equally prestigious Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology since 2004.

Subrat’s impressive database in liver diseases, especially acute (ALF) and subacute liver failure and hepatitis E, has accorded him worldwide recognition. He has over 180 publications in international and national journals of repute. A few of them have invited editorial comments from experts. A great achievement, indeed! His research work is widely quoted in reviews and textbooks. Few examples of his work like ‘Prognostic markers in acute liver failure’, ‘HBV core mutants as a cause of ALF in India’, ‘HEV as the commonest cause of ALF in India’, ‘Intravenous phenytoin does not prevent cerebral edema in ALF’, ‘Parenteral glycyrrhizin in subacute hepatic failure’ have been published in journals of the caliber of Hepatology, which have a high impact factor. He, along with his team members, has developed a sensitive ELISA kit for anti-HCV and a cheap method for quantitative estimation of HCV RNA. To Subrat goes the main credit for starting a state-of-the-art Hepatology ICU at the AIIMS.

Most of those who know Subrat acknowledge his amazing oratory skills. He speaks with such passion and energy that it is as infectious as it is convincing. No wonder he is such a sought-after speaker. He has been an invited speaker at several APASL conferences. The Japanese Society of Hepatology and the World Congresses of Gastroenterology have also invited him as faculty.

His department is associated with our Department of Hepatology at Chandigarh in conducting the annual Single Theme PGI-AIIMS Joint Meets, which are greatly appreciated by the gastroenterologists and physicians of this region. This also is proof of the intense and deep friendship and understanding that we have between us. It is Subrat’s very own brand of straightforward, transparent dealings that have won for him the loyalty of many
staunch supporters and friends.

The credit for all his laurels must, however, be shared by his real backbone, his wife, Tuhina, who gives Subrat leave of absence from home and household duties. Subrat and Tuhina have two lovely daughters, Pragya and Prachi, who are making their own mark in their chosen fields of Biotechnology and Architecture.

I will not say that I have immense faith that Subrat’s dynamism as President of the Indian Society of Gastroenterology will do wonders for the society, because ‘faith’ implies a hidden doubt. I will only say that I know.

I wish him all the best.

Yogesh Chawla

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Indian Journal of Gastroenterology

J Mitra Memorial Award

The Editorial Board announces the award for the best original scientific contribution published in the Journal during the year 2006

Kamaljit Kaur, Safrun Mahmood, Akhtar Mahmood (Department of Biochemistry, Panjab University, Chandigarh 160 014 and Department of Experimental Medicine and Biotechnology, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh 160 012). Susceptibility of lactase to luminal proteases in developing rat intestine. Indian J Gastroenterol 2006;25:179-81

This award is bestowed every year to the department(s) submitting the best paper, selected by a scientific committee appointed by the Editor, from among the Original Articles published in the Journal during the year

The award has been made possible by a generous endowment from M/s J Mitra and Co Ltd, New Delhi