Professor Ramesh Roop Rai has been honored to be the President of the Indian Society of Gastroenterology this year.

I am honoured and privileged as a colleague and friend to write about Professor Rai. He was born on August 18, 1949 in Jodhpur, Rajasthan and was the youngest of five children of Shri Simrit Roop Rai and Mrs Birad Kanwar. His late father was an eminent government official of Rajasthan, as also a Gold Medalist in Law. He inculcated in his children, social and family values and enthusiasm to work and enjoy life without ever getting disheartened. His mother was loving and caring, yet very strict, and taught her children to always follow the path of truth and to have a firm belief in one’s own self.

Dr Rai’s education began in the Sindhi Panchayati School, culminating in the then prestigious Poddar School in Jaipur. It was a dream fulfilled when in 1967, he joined SMS Medical College, Jaipur to pursue his MBBS course. His performance was excellent and in 1973, he was selected for the MD course in General Medicine. He completed his post graduation under the able guidance of the reputed clinician, Prof. S R Mehta and the stalwart and mentor, Prof. K C Kotia.

Dr Rai worked in Government service as a tutor, and then Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine. He had an earnest desire to pursue higher studies in Cardiology, but later developed interest in the rapidly advancing field of Gastroenterology.

Dr Rai trained in Gastroenterology at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi in 1986, under the guidance of a great clinician and human par excellence, Professor B N Tandon, who imbibed in him the value of time management and importance of clinical medicine. During his training, he also had an opportunity to learn from stalwarts like Prof D K Bhargava, Prof. R K Tandon, Prof M P Sharma and Prof. S K Acharya. He learnt the importance of meticulous patient care, clinical skills, the art of presentation and public speaking. His research work under these stalwarts produced many international publications which are quoted in various G I text books.

On completion of his D M in Gastroenterology, Dr Rai returned to his parent institution in SMS Medical College, as Assistant Professor in Medicine, and was entrusted the responsibility of establishing the speciality of Gastroenterology. By completing this mammoth responsibility, he created a Department of unprecedented academic development, and received the honor of being the first Gastroenterologist of the State of Rajasthan. Presently, Professor Rai is heading the Gastroenterology Department at the same institution.

With his great enthusiasm, dedication, sincerity and hard work, he has developed the GI endoscopy services from a small facility area to the present area, which is possibly the largest endoscopy area in our country. It is indeed a matter of great pride that the Unit at the SMS Hospital, Jaipur, with its state of art facilities caters and attracts all complex cases, not only from Rajasthan but also from the neighbouring states. Under Dr Rai’s able leadership, the department has achieved the distinction of being a center of excellence and a seat of training pancreatico-biliary endotherapy.

Gastrointestinal endoscopy has been his field of special interest. His guidance, encouragement and aptitude to develop indigenous endoscopic accessories and techniques, has helped the department achieve a distinct position among other institutions. His article on balloon dilatation without fluoroscopy in achalasia cardia published in Endoscopy has been acclaimed as an important and new technique.

Dr Rai has enormous energy and enthusiasm to convert a thought into reality, with his vision, dedication and sincerity. Most of his students and colleagues have an infatuation to imbibe his qualities, values and attitude towards life. He loves teaching and a major portion of his time is spent with resident doctors. As a teacher, he is a keen and patient listener, giving adequate time and ear to the views and ideas put forward by the students, no matter how different they may be from his own. He has paved the path of excellence for the academic growth of his students and grants them all possible support to pursue their academic interests and
ISG President

goals. He is always appreciative of the work undertaken by his students, thereby becoming a popular figure amongst them.

A firm believer in the fact that life is a bubble, enjoy it while it lasts, Dr. Rai is a counsellor par excellence with a knack of encouraging his students, boosting their morale and keeping their fears at bay.

His commitment to educational excellence has been lent credence with numerous publications to his credit in journals of international repute like The Lancet, British Medical Journal, American Journal of Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Indian Journal of Gastroenterology, Tropical Gastroenterology and World Journal of Gastroenterology to name a few. Apart from having published more than 101 research papers of high scientific standard, Dr Rai has authored various chapters in the text books of Gastroenterology.

He has been a reviewer of manuscripts for American Journal of Gastroenterology and the World Journal of Gastroenterology, and is presently on the International Editorial Board of the latter.

He has successfully organized National and International conferences which are remembered for their academic contents as well as for hospitality, wherein every participant was personally taken care of by Dr Rai.

A people’s person to the core, Dr Rai commands tremendous respect from his colleagues and is loved by one and all in the institution. His empathetic attitude and compassion for all have won him immense popularity.

Deeply attached to his family, Dr Rai is happily married to Sandhya who is working as an Assistant Professor of English in Jaipur. He has two sons who have taken up dentistry and are pursuing their masters’ degree.

He lives his life on the principle of being happy and spreading happiness around. Despite his undeterred pursuit of academics, Dr. Rai never lets go off simple pleasures in life. An avid listener of music of sorts, he enjoys singing and is the joy of every family and academic function. An ardent admirer of Indian literature, he has a flair for creative writing and an undisputable command on the national language, Hindi.

The members of ISG are sure that during his tenure he will work towards perceptual improvement in teaching and practice of Gastroenterology for all trainees, create newer avenues for trainees by his innovative “Distant Classroom Learning” through the internet, wherein a trainer would remain online, solving the doubts of the GI trainees, as well as for practicing doctors in far flung areas. His philosophy about life and work can be summarized as:

“If you have the vision to choose a road,
If you have the strength to pursue the goal,
If you have the grit to let not obstacles deter you,
You will see that the road begins to follow you.”

Sandeep Nijhawan
Department of Gastroenterology, SMS Medical College & Hospital, Jaipur

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 2007


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