



Arjun Dev Sehgal, President NSI 2000

ADS Diagnostic Ltd.,
114, Sant Nagar East of Kailash Road Sant Nagar,
Garhi, New Delhi - 110065

Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal, one of the well known Neurosurgeons died on 20th May 2006 in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital from fulminant aggressive clear cell carcinoma of the lung. He bore his illness with great fortitude. His rather sudden departure from the field of active neurosurgery leaves a void which will be difficult to fill. His multifaceted personality and aura of positivity around him left an impact on all those who came in contact with him.

Introduction and Family background:

Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal was born on 25th of December in 1930 at Sri Ganga Nagar, Rajasthan. During his earlier school days he decided that he would become a doctor as there were not enough doctors in the country especially in his home town. After finishing his education in govt. high school in Sri Ganga Nagar, he joined Dungar College, Bikaner for pre-medical. He



*Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal &
Dr. Mrs. Varsha Sehgal*

graduated from MGM Medical College Indore in 1957. He married Dr. Varsha Sehgal in 1961. He was blessed with two sons. Elder son Dr. Vivek Sehgal after graduation in India moved to the USA and got trained in Cleveland Clinic and obtained American Board Certification in Neuro Radiology. At present he is a well known Neuro-Radiologist settled in Chicago. Second son Dr. Gautam Sehgal after Medical Graduation also moved to USA and joined Yale University as a Research Fellow in Neurology. At present he is settled in India and is owner of two companies i.e. ADS Diagnostics and VED-MED which supplies medical equipments to various institutions.

Post Graduate Medical Education:

Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal desired to be trained in Neurosurgery. He joined Deconess Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio as an intern, though his primary objective was to become a neurosurgery resident at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Sehgal sought permission to attend Saturday Grand Rounds in Neurosurgery. Dr. Gardner, Chairman, Department of Neurosurgery was impressed enough to admit Dr Sehgal as the first non American to a Post Graduate programme in Neurosurgery. After completing five years in Neurosurgery he was accepted at Yale University for a fellowship. During his training he modified Dr. Gardner's operating chair and Gardner's skull clamp and his efforts were well appreciated. In view of his devotion, analytical mind and completion of American Board Certification in 1963, he was appointed as Consultant and Research Associate in Cleveland Clinic Hospital from 1963 to 1964.

In spite of a promising career in USA he came back to India in 1964 to settle in Delhi. He appeared for an interview to join the Indian army but did not like the way the army functioned! He joined G.B. Pant Hospital and was HOD of Neurosurgery from 1965 to 1968. He had full support of Prof. Baldev Singh eminent neurologist. Dr. Sehgal established himself as a competent neurosurgeon, building up a commendable practice. Everyone appreciated his clinical acumen, surgical skills and foresight to set up a neurosurgery practice that was regarded as one of the best in North India.

Finally Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal joined Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in 1968 as a visiting consultant in the Department of Neurosurgery. He wanted to create an outstanding Department of Neurosciences in Northern India, to offer neurosurgical services to the affluent sector and also free services to the poor patients using the general beds including free ICU beds in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. He was one of the founder members of the Board of Management which was created in 1976 to run the hospital. He became member of various committees. He made significant contribution as Joint Secretary Cum Treasurer and also as Chairman of the Medico-Legal Committee. His profound knowledge about legal matters was utilized by the management and doctors in other states. He established the 5 years DNB programme in Neurosurgery in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Achievements included becoming President of Neurological Society of India, First President of Neuro-Trauma Society of India, President of Healthcare Foundation of India, President, Indian Society of Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery, Convener of American College of Surgeons India Section and President of the International College of Surgeons (India section). He upgraded and modernized the Medical Library of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital during this tenure.



*Felicitated by President of India
APJ Abdul Kalam*



*A.D. Seghal & B. Ramamurthi at
1st ISSFN*

He established a well recognized Seghal's Neurological Research Institute in Kailash Colony, New Delhi in 1969, fully equipped with EMG, EEG, modern operation theatre and 24x7 neurosurgical and neurological services. Set up the first CT scan and First MRI centre in Northern India at his Institute. Demonstrated that neurosurgeons and neurologists can join the private sector without fear. Developed Seghal's Stereotactic instrument, promoted use of intrathecal steroids and steroids in neurological disorders. Had many publications in National and International journals.

His benevolence was legendary. He offered jobs to young neurosurgeons at his institute and gave generous financial help to establish their careers. At Sir Ganga Ram Hospital he encouraged DNB students in Neurosurgery to participate in national conferences. He looked after their travel, stay and above all gave generous allowances for their entertainment at the conference venues. Because of his unparalleled interest in teaching programmes Department of Neurosciences meeting twice a week was well attended by all faculty members including Neuropathologists, Neuroradiologists and DNB students in Neurology and Neurosurgery. He

was very particular in conducting ward rounds and everyone had to be well dressed. Dr. Arjun Seghal was always immaculately dressed.

In Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, doctors with the help of the Management formed “Doctor’s Forum” and also created a large facility “Consultant Combine” where Doctors had the opportunity to relax and intermingle with other consultants. His enthusiasm and joy for life was boundless. At 11.00 sharp he visited “Consultant Combine”. All the consultants gathered around him to listen to his opinions, comments and criticism on various subjects including running of hospitals. He expressed his feelings openly. He always thought that coming to the “Consultant Combine” and expressing his views was a good “TENSION BUSTER”. He was a great organizer and hosted a NSI conference in 1995 at Ashok Hotel in Delhi. Delegates attending the conference were overwhelmed by the fabulous arrangements and the way they were looked after.

His achievements in Ganga Ram Hospital are laudable and exemplary. He strongly believed that for progress in neurosurgery, it is essential to have separate sub specialties. He created separate departments of Vascular Neurosurgery, Pediatric Neurosurgery and Neuro Spinal Surgery. He encouraged neurosurgeons’ to develop Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery, Epilepsy surgery, Minimal Access Endoscopic-surgery and Vascular Interventional Neuroradiology. As a Board Member created post of Neuropathologist and appointed late Dr. Subimal Roy, a well known neuropathologist from AIIMS, to that post. As Chairman of the Organ Transplant Committee he made sure that the donors and recipients were interviewed and their statements were videographed and documents scrutinized to avoid any illegal practices. Because of his towering personality and open hearted invitation many stalwarts in neurosurgery from USA, UK, Japan, Germany, Scotland, France, and Singapore visited the department. He was felicitated by Late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam for his outstanding contributions in the field of Medicine.

Dr. Arjun Dev Sehgal and Dr. Mrs. Varsha Seghal were keen travellers and managed to see practically the whole world. Dr. Varsha Seghal a well known Gynecologist and Obstetrician is full of energy and zest. She was the main force behind Dr. Arjun Seghal and managed the Seghal’s Neurological Institute well. After his untimely demise in 2006 she kept the institution functioning till Feb 2012 with the help of neurosurgeons and neurologists

close to him. He never forgot his roots and visited his home town Sri Ganga Nagar frequently to help people. He created ADS charitable trust and set-up a Diagnostic Centre with CT, Cardiac-Echo, Ultrasound and other lab facilities. He provided number of scholarships for women's upliftment.

The faculty of Neurosciences of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital and members of Delhi Neurological Association pay homage to this great man who really cared and shared everything with others deploying to sensitivity, dignity and pragmatic maturity. His dignified arrogance tinged with humility and humbleness and open hearted benevolence is worth remembering. To conclude, Dr. Arjun Dev Seghal was one of those rare human beings who needed no memorial. He lives in the hearts of those whose lives he touched. There could not be a better memorial to any human. "May God bless his soul". ■

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Dr. (Col) V.S. Madan, VSM

Email Id : vijaysantoshmadan@gmail.com

Emeritus Consultant, Neurosurgery and Spinal Surgery

Advisor, Department of Spinal Surgery,

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital

Past President, Neuro Trauma Society of India,

Delhi Neurological Association & Delhi Spine Society