

Obituary

Professor J.N. Pande (1941-2020)



Professor J.N. Pande
(14 June 1941 – 23 May 2020)

The demise of Professor Jitendra Nath Pande on May 23, 2020 in his seventy-ninth year ended the service of a distinguished and beloved physician, pulmonologist, teacher and a dedicated researcher. It is a matter of great privilege and pride for me to write the obituary of a medical legend and doyen of Pulmonary Medicine in India, late Professor J.N. Pande. Professor Pande was born on June 14, 1941, in Shikohabad, district Firozabad, in Uttar Pradesh to a school teacher Late Shri Madan Mohan Pande (an English teacher) and Late Smt Kamla Devi Pande. He joined the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi as an undergraduate in 1958, did MD Medicine in 1966 and joined the Faculty of Medicine as Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi. Eventually, he became Chair of the Department of Medicine in 1993, till his superannuation at AIIMS, New Delhi in 2003. Thereafter, he worked as a Senior Consultant at Sitaram Bhartia Institute of Science and Research, New Delhi till his demise. His areas of interest included pulmonary physiology, intensive care, clinical epidemiology and clinical-decision analysis. At AIIMS, he was mentored by late Professor K.L. Wig who taught him the immense power of careful clinical observation. He was trained in pulmonary physiology at Hammersmith Hospital, London, UK; in fiberoptic bronchoscopy at Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden; in Clinical Epidemiology at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine, and Public Health, University of North Carolina, USA.

Professor Pande was a Founder Fellow of the National College of Chest Physicians of India. He served as Chief Editor of the *Annals of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of India*. He earned the unique distinction of editing single-handed the *Indian Journal of Chest Diseases & Allied Sciences* for several decades and served as an active Editor of the

said Journal till the year 2011. He also served as a Member of Governing Body and Chairperson of Scientific Advisory Committee of Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute, Delhi. His work on bronchiectasis has been quoted in *Textbook of Respiratory Medicine* by Crofton and Douglas. In 1998, I was privileged to contribute chapters on Broncho-alveolar Lavage and Pleural Effusion in the textbook titled *Respiratory Medicine in Tropics* edited by Professor Pande and published by Oxford University Press. He contributed immensely to the investigation of Bhopal Gas Tragedy in 1986.

I was closely associated with Professor Pande since the time I joined his Unit in the Department of Medicine in 1979 when he was Assistant Professor of Medicine. I made several observations while closely working with him. He was the epitome of a great teacher, clinician and researcher. All these qualities made him very popular among his colleagues, students and patients. He was a gifted teacher and had an art of abridging patient's clinical details and laboratory investigations and one used to relish his analytic power during clinical discussions in ward rounds, ICU rounds and in the outpatient department. He always used to encourage his junior faculty and residents to make presentations in clinical combined rounds and clinical grand rounds at AIIMS, New Delhi and used to dominate discussion on any topic and used to contribute very constructively. He was frequently invited as a visiting Professor by other medical colleges and institutes across India. One of such events I remember with him when he was invited at PGIMER, Chandigarh for a difficult clinicopathological conference (CPC) discussion, he hit bull's-eye in that CPC discussion. He impressed everyone with his lectures and bedside clinical discussions. Everyone at PGI, Chandigarh was enthralled with his extensive knowledge.

Besides professional association with Professor Pande, I personally consider myself a lucky person to be mentored by him. He had a great influence in shaping my career. He trained me in pulmonary physiology, especially lung mechanics and cardiopulmonary exercise physiology, fiberoptic bronchoscopy and the technique of broncho-alveolar lavage (BAL). Once I had a great learning experience from Professor Pande when he got a referral from Cardiology ward (erstwhile D7 ward) of AIIMS, New Delhi. The patient was admitted in ICCU and was getting severely out of breath while lying down supine and both junior and senior residents on night duty injected several dosages of intravenous diuretics without any relief. The next day, Professor Pande asked me to accompany him to see this patient on consultation. After evaluating him, based on simple bedside clinical examination, he said that the patient had bilateral diaphragmatic weakness and instructed me to arrange an oesophageal catheter with an oesophageal balloon and a gastric balloon in the afternoon after the OPD hours. We could confirm the diagnosis with this study. That was one moment when I was amazed to witness the Professor Pande's clinical acumen and quick responses in making a diagnosis. He often told me to develop skills to make a diagnosis the moment patient enters the room. Later, he entrusted me with the responsibility of establishing sleep laboratory in the department.

Jointly working we had several firsts to our credit, we described for the first time acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) in miliary tuberculosis, recruitment of lymphocytes and its subsets from peripheral blood to the disease sites in tuberculosis and sarcoidosis, description of a comprehensive large series of sarcoidosis.

Professor Pande was an enthusiastic researcher as well. After rounding in the OPD, wards, ICU in the forenoons, we used to work together in the afternoons performing lung mechanics, cardio-pulmonary exercises in the respiratory research laboratory. I was most impressed with his two research articles published in *Thorax*. One of them was a single authored publication in 1981, I enjoyed reading the paper (Interrelationship between lung volume, expiratory flow, and lung transfer factor in fibrosing alveolitis) several times. The other research article I liked most was on risk factors for hepatotoxicity from anti-tuberculosis drugs: a case-control study, published in *Thorax* in 1996. This paper was result of a research project which he got from a grant from Medical Research Council, UK.

Professor Pande was always a great support in academics and research for me. When I was senior resident, he was the one who helped me in writing my first publication (a case report on Thymoma with pure red cell aplasia). Subsequently, we together published a series of 133 cases on diffuse interstitial pulmonary fibrosis in 1984 and this was based on clinical grand round held at AIIMS. I must admit that Professor Pande had outstanding writing skills as well. In one of our publications in the *American Journal of*

Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine, *AJRCCM* also known as Blue Journal (erstwhile *American Review of Respiratory Diseases*) (1991) on chronic silicosis, he described the intensity of silica dust from stone crushers at work place, Lal Kuan in Badarpur, New Delhi in a sentence as "the visible dust haze created in the work environment". This sentence got special appreciation from all four international reviewers. Professor Pande always used to be a co-author in almost all my publications as he contributed immensely both intellectually and content wise to these publications. As co-authors, we jointly published 14 international and 56 national research articles (including two landmark publications in the prestigious *American Review of Respiratory Diseases* journal [*AJRCCM*] on chronic silicosis and miliary tuberculosis). While conducting research in silicosis, I learnt from him determination of pressure-volume characteristics of the lungs, and measurements of static (Cstat) and dynamic (Cdyn) compliance of lungs. Professor Pande always encouraged me. When I returned to India in 1994, after completing research fellowship in the Department of Pulmonary Immunology and Molecular Biology, at Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard Medical School), Boston, USA, working on effect of an anti-CD3 monoclonal antibody on bleomycin-induced lymphokine production and lung injury, Professor Pande had arranged a lecture by me in the Department for sharing the knowledge I had gained; he also helped me in drafting the research proposal "Cytokine release in tuberculosis".

Due to such great bonding and understanding, we both jointly guided more than 35 research projects on cardiopulmonary exercises in various pulmonary and cardiac disorders.

Apart from research, Professor Pande always tried to modernise the hospital infrastructure and facilities for the welfare of patients. He started 8-bedded ICU in medical ward which later on housed state-of-the-art instruments and the department often got requests to avail this facility in difficult cases while on mechanical ventilation.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention about his never-ending commitment to serve the suffering humanity with dedication. Professor Pande will always be remembered for his commitment towards clinical care, teaching and medical research. He will remain alive in my thoughts as a mentor and a great senior colleague and will always be remembered while diagnosing complex medical cases.

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