

Living Legends

Living legend in dermatology-Professor VK Sharma

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PROFESSOR VINOD K SHARMA MBBS, MD, FAMS, FIMSA, FRCP LONDON

1. Year-wise curriculum vitae

Medical Training

1973–1979: MBBS from Dayanand Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab University

1979–1982: MD Dermatology and Venereology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

1982–1985: Senior Resident at Department of Dermatology and Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

Fellowship One year 1992–1993 at National Institute for Leprosy Research* and Department of Dermatology at Juntendo University, Tokyo, Japan

* Currently known as National Institute for Infectious Diseases

Fellowship/Membership

Fellow Royal College of Physicians, London (FRCP, London)

Fellow National Academy of Medical Sciences (FAMS), New Delhi

International Fellow American Academy of Dermatology

Member International Society of Dermatology

Member European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology

Fellow Indian Society of Dermatopathology (FISDP)

Fellow Indian Academy of Dermatology (FIAD)

Academic Appointments

1986–1990: Assistant Professor at Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

1990–1994: Associate Professor at Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

1994–1998: Additional Professor at Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

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1998–2001: Professor, Department of Dermatology and Venereology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

2001–2020: Professor and Head, Department of Dermatology and Venereology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

2016: Selected for the post of Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhopal but declined

2020–till date: Dean Academic Affairs and Professor and Head of Dermatology, School of Medical Sciences and Research, Sharda University, Greater Noida, UP

Hospital Attachments

1979–1982: Resident, Dermatology and Venereology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

1982–1985: Senior Resident, Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

1986–1998: Faculty, Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology at Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh

1998–2020: Faculty, Dermatology and Venereology at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and Incharge Allergy Clinic and Pigmentary Dermatoses, Psoriasis and Vitiligo Clinics and Pulse Dye Laser, ND Yag lasers, 30 bedded inpatient ward

2020 November onwards: Faculty Dermatology at Sharda Hospital, Greater Noida, UP

Office and Associations

1997: National Vice President Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists

2000: President Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists, Delhi State Branch

2002–2004: President Indian Association for Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS

2009: National President Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists

2011: Organizing Co Chair-World Congress of IUSTI, New Delhi

2013: Congress President XI International Congress of Dermatology

2014–2017: Vice President International Society of Dermatology

2016–2018: Director American Academy of Dermatology

2007, 2011, 2015, 2019: International Delegate to International League of Dermatologic Societies at 4 successive World Congresses of Dermatology

2018–2021 Executive Committee Member International Society of Dermatology

National and International awards

1993: Dr CGS Iyer Oration Award, Indian Council Medical Research, New Delhi, India National Awards for Leprosy Research for young person under 40 years.

1996: Lala Ram Chand Kandhari Award, Indian Council Medical Research, New Delhi, India National awards for Dermatology and Venereology

1997: Fulford Oration for Research on Alopecia Areata by Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologist (IADV)

2005: Dr RV Rajam Oration awarded by National Academy of Medical sciences “Trends in Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Treatment in India” at “NAMS 45” at Ahmedabad

2007: Dr MA Wali Oration awarded by IASSTD and AIDS “Recent Advances in Chlamydia Infections”

2009: Sukumar Ghosh Memorial Oration for “Derma-Allergology” at Institute of Allergic and Immunologic Skin Diseases at Calcutta on “Plant Dermatitis”

2013: Professor LK Bhutani Memorial Award for Teaching and Research by Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists at Ahmedabad

2014: Awarded Life Time Achievement Award by International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS) for work in International Dermatology

2016: Maibach Travel Award by American Contact dermatitis Society for photopatch tests in parthenium dermatitis

2017: Indubala Memorial Award for best paper in Occupational Contact Dermatitis/Contact Dermatitis by IJDVL

2018: Professor KC Kandhari Foundation Award–A life-time achievement award by Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologist at Kochi

2018: Times of India Award for Achievers in Legend category for Dermatology

Editor/Editorial Board of Dermatology Journals

2002–2004: Member Editorial Board of Indian Journal of STD and AIDS

2005–2010: Member Editorial Board of Contact Dermatitis, Official Journal of European Society of Contact Dermatitis

2005–2020: Member Editorial Board of Dermatitis, Official Journal of American Society of Contact Dermatitis

2013–2016: Associate Editor British Journal of Dermatology

2015–2021: Member Advisory Editorial Board, Indian Journal of Dermatology

2017–2021 Member Editorial Board, International Journal of Dermatology

Publications

Total Number 352

Total 3647 citations, H index 30, i10 index 123,

Last 5 years--total 2081 citations, H index 23, i10 index 73

by Google scholar

Book Chapters 15

Citations in textbooks/year book 29

Books Published 6

2003: Editor in chief “Sexually transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS” First edition, p 541, Viva Books, New Delhi

2003: Management of Psoriasis, Massey Art Press, New Delhi, pp. 1–96.

2008: Editor in chief “Handbook of Urticaria“ 2008, First edition, Massey Art Press, New Delhi, pp. 1–87.

2009: IADVL Therapeutic Guidelines: Guidelines for Vitiligo, Stevens Johnson Syndrome-Toxic Epidermal necrolysis and Psoriasis. Indian Association of Dermatologists and Venereologists and Leprologists, New Delhi, pp. 1–72.

2009: Editor in chief “Sexually transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS” 2nd edition, Viva Books, New Delhi, pp. 1–907

2018: Sexually Transmitted Infections, Sharma VK, Gupta V, Viva books, New Delhi, pp. 1–334

Research grants as Principal Investigator

2006–2008: ICMR-Role of cyclophosphamide pulse as adjuvant therapy in pemphigus vulgaris

2008–2012: DBT Program support for skin pigmentation and melanocyte-keratinocyte network biology

2010–2016: ICMR-NIH collaboration–Genetic analysis of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis in India

2011–2015: ICMR elucidating role of Foxp3 expression and Foxp3 promoter DNA methylation level in active non-segmental generalized vitiligo

2015–2018: ICMR defining the role of genetic, epigenetic and immunological components involved in the pathogenesis of alopecia areata

2. What brought you to this field?

I was fond of General Medicine but when I got a seat in Dermatology at AIIMS, New Delhi, I decided to join dermatology. I was inspired by the lectures of Late Prof. LK Bhutani at my college. Moreover, dermatology being a visual science and appreciating and recognizing what is lying in front of you, was exciting for me

3. Who were your mentors?

I learned dermatology from Late Prof. LK Bhutani, Prof. JS Pasricha and Prof. RK Pandhi at AIIMS, Delhi. I did my thesis on gonococcal urethritis, it helped to develop life-long interest in sexually transmitted infections. Subsequently I worked at PGIMER, Chandigarh with Prof. Surrinder Kaur and Prof. Bhushan Kumar, where I realized the importance of research in leprosy and also started preliminary work in Alopecia areata and STDs. Prof. NK Ganguly at PGIMER, Chandigarh who later became Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, was my mentor for developing interest in molecular research. At National Institute for Leprosy Research, I was trained by Late Sakamoto Sensei and at Juntendo University by Prof. Hideoki Ogawa and Prof. Kenji Takamori Sensei. I collaborated with Prof. James Elder, University of Michigan for study of genetics in Indians with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Later I worked with Prof. Alex Anstey, Editor British Journal of Dermatology and Prof. Chris Bunker, President British Association of Dermatology, Prof. George Reizner, President International Society of Dermatology.

4. Who made you learn most?

I learned different aspects from different teachers. I learnt basic dermatology from Late Prof. LK Bhutani, research in dermatology from Prof. JS Pasricha and STDs from Prof. RK Pandhi. I learnt importance of writing research papers from Prof. Bhushan Kumar and Prof. Surrinder Kaur. I was introduced to Molecular Research by joining research projects with Prof. NK Ganguly, later I continued to learn it further at National Institute for Leprosy Research, Tokyo, Japan and University of Michigan, USA.

Prof. JS Pasricha influenced me regarding importance of writing books with your own experience in dermatology and highlight Indian dermatology.

5. List of 10 best publications

Parihar AS, Tembhre MK, Sharma VK, Gupta S, Chattopadhyay P, Deepak KK. Effect of narrowband ultraviolet B treatment on microRNA expression in active nonsegmental generalized vitiligo. Br J Dermatol. 2020 Jan 23. doi:10.1111/bjd.18890. [Epub ahead of print]

Sharma VK, Gupta V, Bhari N, Singh V. Rituximab as an adjuvant therapy for pemphigus: experience in 61 patients from a single center with long-term follow-up. *Int J Dermatol*. 2019 Jun 30. doi: 10.1111/ijd.14546. [Epub ahead of print] PubMed PMID: 31257579.

Sharma VK, Bhatia R, Yadav CP. Clinical Profile and Allergens in Pigmented Cosmetic Dermatitis and Allergic Contact Dermatitis to Cosmetics in India. *Dermatitis*. 2018 Sep/Oct;29(5):264–269.

Khandpur S, **Sharma VK**. Assessment of Efficacy of the 595-nm Pulsed Dye Laser in the Treatment of Facial Port-Wine Stains in Indian Patients. *Dermatol Surg*. 2016 Jun;42(6):717–26

Wadwani A, **Sharma VK**, Khaitan BK. Clinical profile of photodermatoses in the dark skin. *Clinical and Experimental Dermatology* 2013 Dec;38(8):823–9.

Tembhre MK, **Sharma VK**. T helper and regulatory T cell cytokines in the peripheral blood of active alopecia areata. Accepted in *Br J Dermatol*. 2013 Sep;169(3):543–8.

Sharma VK, Chakrabarti A. Common contact sensitizers in Chandigarh, India: Patch testing with European Standard Series. *Contact Dermatitis* 1998;38:127–31.

Mahajan VK, **Sharma VK**, Kaur I, Chakravarti A. Contact dermatitis in agriculture workers: Role of common crops, fodder and weeds. *Contact Dermatitis* 1996;35:373–74.

Sharma VK, Pulsed administration of corticosteroids in the treatment of alopecia areata. *Int J Dermatol* 1996;13:156–58.

Sharma VK, Dawn G, Kumar B. Profile of alopecia areata in northern India, *Int J Dermatol* (1996) 35:22–7.

Best is yet to come in the form of submitted paper

Stuart PE, Tsoi LC, Nair RP, Ghosh M, Kabra M, Shaiq PA, Raja GK, Qamar R, Thelma BK, Patrick MT, Parihar A, Singh S, Khandpur S, Kumar U, Degenhardt F, Tejasvi T, Voorhees JJ, Weidinger S, Franke A, Abecasis GR, **Sharma VK**, Elder JT. Transethnic analysis of psoriasis susceptibility in South Asians and Europeans enhances fine-mapping in the MHC and genomewide, *Am J Human Genetics* 2021.

6. Leadership role

I was fortunate to get many leadership roles, first and most important was Professor and Head of Dermatology and Venereology at institute of international repute, namely All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. I took it as a responsibility to maintain and improve standards of care at AIIMS, Delhi and rest of the country. My passion for postgraduate teaching in dermatology was evident right from

senior residency, it served as spring board for many other leadership roles.

I also got an opportunity to lead Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologist (IADVL) as President in 2009 and I introduced concepts of conflict of interest and transparency and opened up IADVL orations to all pharmaceutical houses. As Chairman of first Therapeutic Guidelines Committee of IADVL, I was instrumental in preparing guidelines for SJS-TEN, Psoriasis and Vitiligo.

I also served as President of Indian Association for Study of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and planned and completed publication of first and second edition of IASSTD Textbook of Sexually transmitted Diseases and AIDS as Editor in Chief. I served as President and Secretary of Contact and Occupational Dermatoses Forum of India and contributed by introducing locally made Finn Chambers for patch testing that are used in Indian subcontinent.

I also served as Vice President, International Society of Dermatology, on Board of Directors American Academy of Dermatology.

I also served as dermatologists to several Prime Ministers, Presidents and Vice Presidents as well as Ministers and Members of Parliament.

7. Achievements and regrets

I had privilege of working at two of the best institutes in the medical field namely, AIIMS, Delhi and PGIMER, Chandigarh. I was fortunate to be Head of the Department of Dermatology and Venereology at the turn of century in 2001 when dermatology in India was coming of age with new enthusiasm in learning lasers, dermatosurgery, newer drugs and biologics in dermatology.

I was instrumental in developing sub-specialities of dermatopathology, dermatosurgery and lasers and later pediatric dermatology at AIIMS, New Delhi. I am proud of maintaining high standard of dermatology training for nearly two decades at AIIMS, New Delhi. In addition I was able to establish molecular research lab in the department of Dermatology and restart PhD program.

I was able to increase research projects and publications more than five-fold from 2001. I was assisted in these by very cooperative and brilliant faculty and residents and PhD scholars with full support of AIIMS administration.

I was also able to project Indian dermatology at international level in USA, Europe and UK by delivering talks and research collaborations and holding international conferences. I organized XI International Congress of Dermatology and it was a great success and was attended by more than 4000 dermatologists.

I have no regrets but do feel that more diplomatic approach achieves better results, talent and hard work alone is not enough.

8. Any significant event to remember

It is difficult to describe one situation from whole life as significant but I remember some anecdotes with a prominent person not getting skin malignancy operated as it will lead political backlash, later he succumbed to it. I have watched politicians on television and in real life and seen their priorities and humour or lack of it.

9. Ten most influential professionals in your field

It is not really possible to name 10 persons from a profession. Every Indian state has more than 10 dermatologists who influence at national level and internationally, the number is too large to name.

10. Future in this field

Future of dermatology is very bright and we need to maintain balance between clinical and aesthetic dermatology and

must guard against losing to cosmetics and dermatosurgery as all aspects of dermatology are essential. Due to COVID pandemic, hands on training of residents may suffer, it will need supplementation later on. The challenge of long-term treatment of vitiligo, eczema, psoriasis and even melasma and dermatophytosis is in front of us as despite many treatment options, patients are still suffering. I expect, in future skin concerns and skin cancers will become frequent with aging population and cosmetology will become more scientific and get integrated into dermatology. Training of newly qualified dermatologists in field of dermatosurgery and lasers will remain a challenge due to lack of uniform distribution of resources across India.

Note: Living legend in dermatology-Professor VK Sharma interview was conceived and conducted by Devinder Mohan Thappa.

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