

The Great Neurosurgeon and Spinal Surgery— Vijay Kumar Kak

Prof Vijay Kumar Kak was born on 15 October 1938 at Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh. He had his initial schooling in DAV Institutions at Muzaffarnagar, Kanpur and Allahabad. He joined SN Medical College, Agra, in 1955, and graduated in 1960 with distinctions in seven subjects, several gold medals and first position at all the three professional examinations. He was awarded the Chancellor's Medal for the best graduate in Faculty of Medicine of Agra University. He obtained his MS (Surgery) under the able guidance of Profs SP Srivastava and AN Razdan. He then proceeded to UK for higher training in Neurological Surgery and worked at Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, under Mr Alex Taylor, Colin Gleadhill and Derek Gordon. He also pursued and obtained his FRCS (Eng) and FRCS (Edin) while working at Belfast. Upon his return, he joined PGIMER, Chandigarh, as Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery in 1969 under the leadership of Prof DR Gulati, and retired as a Senior Professor in 1998. Along with Prof Galati, Prof Kak trained a large number of candidates in neurosurgery. Notable among his trainees are Prof D Rout, Prof Sushil Kumar, late Prof PPS Mathur, Prof SN Mathuriya, Prof VN Jindal, Lt Gen S Biswas, Prof BS Sharma, Prof B Indira Devi, Prof Ashis Pathak, Prof MK Tewari, Dr YR Yadav, Maj Gen P Singh and Brig HS Bhatoe, to name a few. He was appointed an Emeritus Professor at PGI in 2000.



Vijay Kumar Kak

Prof Kak had been reasonably good at indoor sports and was table tennis player in his medical college days and later at PGI. He is a good bridge player and chess player also. He was instrumental in developing an excellent neurosurgical facility at PGI, with good academic record. His areas of interest in neurosurgery included cerebrovascular neurosurgery, pediatric neurosurgery, pituitary surgery, radiofrequency rhizotomies, stereotactic neurosurgery and spinal surgery. Spinal surgeries included discectomies (both lumbar and cervical), decompression in fluorotic spines, surgery for craniovertebral anomalies, posterior spinal fixation in cases of spinal trauma and surgery for spinal dysraphic states. In the early nineties he was instrumental in supervising his junior colleagues in doing anterolateral approach for dorsal spinal injuries. He was honored with Fellowships of National Academy of Medical Sciences, International Medical Sciences Academy, and Institute of Hospital Engineers. He became the President of Neurological Society of India, Indian Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery, Indian Society for Cerebrovascular Surgery, Chandigarh, Surgical Society and Association of Neurosurgeons of North-West Zone. He was an Honorary Consultant to the Armed Forces, and several awards including Dr BC Roy National Award, Chandigarh Rattan, Punjab Rattan, numerous orations, and Lifetime Achievement Award of Neurological Society of India. He has several international publications in the field of neurosurgery.

Prof Kak, after serving as Chairman of Neurosurgery at PGI for over a decade, joined Chandigarh Administration as Secretary Medical Education and Director-Principal of Government Medical College, Chandigarh, for 5 years. He was instrumental in developing a state-of-the-art medical college and getting it recognized for the graduate course. He started neurosurgical services and postgraduate courses in various departments in this medical college. After retirement, he still is active as practicing neurosurgeon and teaches the young neurosurgeons who join him in practice.

Prof Kak was, and still is, very popular among his colleagues, friends and students. A very well read surgeon, strict disciplinarian, master craftsman, an able administrator and a thorough gentleman are some of the adjectives added by his friends and students whom I have met. This can be gauged by the fact that all through his stay in PGI, I had seen him almost daily interacting with neurologists, neuropathologists, endocrinologist, ENT team, radiologists and radiation oncologists who were involved in the management of neurosurgical patients. This speaks volumes about his leadership qualities. Prof Kak believes that training can only be excellent if all the stake holders (mentioned above) have very good interpersonal relationship, and he strived hard all through for this. The biggest feather in Prof Kak's cap is that I have not heard a single person talking not well about him and his mannerisms, and the comment made by one of his colleagues, Prof Alan Crockard, who acknowledged openly in neurosurgical fora, 'This is the man who taught me making my first burr hole!' speaks volumes about this great teacher who is my mentor also.

LISTS OF PUBLICATIONS OF PROFESSOR VK KAK (SPINAL SURGERY)

(A) International Journals

1. Pani KC, Kak VK, Chopra JS. Intramedullary lipoma of the spinal cord. *Neurochirurgia (Stuttg)* 1972;15:33-35.
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16. Gupta VK, Gupta SK, Khosla VK, Vasishta RK, Kak VK. Aneurysmal Bone Cysts of the Spine. *Surg Neurol* 1994;42:428-432.

(B) National Journals

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18. Pani KC, Basur RL, Kak VK, Gulati DR. Atypical meningocele. *Neurology (India)* 1972;20:106-108.
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Research Projects of Professor VK Kak

A. Theses guided: PhD—02
MS—18
MD—11
MSc—02

B. Project titles:

- Experimental study of ischaemic damage to the cervical spinal cord.
- Lumbar canal stenosis: a clinicoradiological study.
- Comparison of computed tomography myelography (CTM) *vs* conventional myelography (CM) in spinal cord compression.
- Computed tomography in evaluation of spinal injuries.

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