

Indian Contribution to Obstetrics and Gynaecology

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Dr. V. N. Purandare

Dr. Vithal Nilkanth Purandare was born in a family of legends. His father Dr. N. A. Purandare and brother Dr. B. N. Purandare were very famous Gynecologists of their times. Yet, because of his grit and determination, he managed to cut his own turf, and carve his own niche. He

was a complete obstetrician and gynecologist, a teacher par excellence and a master surgeon.

He was born in Bombay on April 26, 1925, the youngest of seven siblings of the renowned Dr. N. A. Purandare.

The young Dr. V. N. Purandare wanted to become a fighter pilot and was fascinated by the men from airforce as he witnessed the second world war, but fate had other plans. “I guess I was destined to save lives, not destroy them” he said.

As a young boy, he grew up in Sandhurst road, went to Wilson High School in Khetwadi, and then to Elphinstone college. Photography, reading, and painting were his hobbies.

Dr. V. N. Purandare did his MBBS from Seth G.S. Medical College and Mumbai University in 1948, MD from KEM Hospital in 1951. He then proceeded to UK, where he finished his FRCS from the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. He worked in U.K. for the next 3 years and returned to India soon after.

In 1955, he took up a job as Honorary Obstetrician and Gynecologist at the KEM Hospital and Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital and was attached to Seth G.S. Medical College. In 1960, he became a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at these institutions. Soon in 1970, he rose to become the Head of Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 1983, he was appointed as Emeritus Professor at the same institutions.

Dr. Purandare became President of the Mumbai Obstetrics and Gynecology society in 1973 and held the post for 2 years. He also went on to become FOGSI President in 1981 after being a Treasurer from 1961 to 1973. He served the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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of India since 1972. He was Associate Editor till 1986 and as Editor from 1987 to 1996.

Dr. V. N. Purandare was a WHO Consultant for Mother and Child Health Research from 1970 to 1983. He was also a popular orator and delivered lectures in several foreign universities like Japan, Sweden, UK, and US. He was often invited to demonstrate his gynecological surgeries. He devised his own vaginoabdominal hysterectomy. Another innovation was his operation of high cerclage with a tape from above and below. He is also credited for reevaluating

Dr. V. N. Shirodkar's cerclage operation with mercelene tape proving its superiority over Mc Donald's cerclage operation.

There was a placard that he carried with him at all times, which contains a verse from Bhagawad Gita "Let us serve people for as long as we live" that in essence is what the medical profession is all about.

At the ripe old age of 88, we lost this wonderful surgeon on 25th June, 2013. He is survived by his son Shekhar.