

CONNECTIONS

BULLETIN OF THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHANDIGARH OLD STUDENTS ASSOCIATION (GMCCOSA)

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From the Editors desk

"What is crazy?" asked my almost-four year old on our drive back home from her pre-school a few weeks ago. I was initially amazed at the audacity of her question, but then recalled some 'good parenting' tips I had learnt from a variety of sources. I probed further and came to know that Ryan had called Emily 'crazy' at school during an argument. I gave her an 'age-appropriate' answer, and at least for the time being, she seemed convinced. But her question left me thinking, that the answers to some questions keep on changing – they alter with the timing and context of an inquiry.

"What is GMCCOSA?" I asked myself as I began writing this editorial for the second anniversary issue of Connections. As I thought more, I realized that this was one of those questions with a changing and ever evolving answer. I never anticipated how the answer to this question would change over just the first two years of GMCCOSA's inception. We have diversified considerably from our humble beginning merely as a portal to connect GMCH alumni. Most of you are familiar with KOSHISH, the brain child of Sandeep Kochar ('93), which is making small but sure strides towards achieving its goal of instilling a sense of social responsibility and leadership among current students. We have been able to guide at least some of our juniors through the residency application process in the USA. We are planning to expand these efforts for alumni planning to go to the UK. Our membership base is gradually growing; the last issue of Connections was accessed by approximately 500 different computers (I can only assume that this translates to at least as many people as well). Besides continuing to expand our membership base and the intensifying the efforts of KOSHISH, we are hoping to implement the pilot phase of a 'mentorship program' in 2006. This will involve connecting a senior alumnus with one to three current students or new graduates with similar interests.

We are especially indebted to all the alumni and current students who keep us abreast with happenings in their lives and at GMCH. We have a never-ending appetite for information about GMCites...so keep those emails coming.

But how much ever we diversify and expand, the main goal of GMCCOSA will always remain the same – keep

all GMCites in touch. We wish you all a very prosperous New Year, and as always, keep in touch.

*Navneet Majhail
(91 batch)*

KOSHISH – A Thank You Note

We would like to express our gratitude for the bigheartedness GMCites have shown towards the cause of KOSHISH. Neeraj Manchanda ('91) epitomizes the generosity our alumni have demonstrated; he has been regularly sending a check for \$50 every month for the past five months. KOSHISH has adequate funds for the moment – we will request for more contributions as the need arises.

A special thanks to our grass-root workers who are making the efforts of KOSHISH a success; we would particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of Niyati Mahajan, Era Dhaliwal and Shashank (all of '00 batch) – they have been the tour de force behind the activities of KOSHISH. Ashish Khanna ('98) and Varinder Pal Sandhu ('93) have also put in a lot of time and effort for this endeavor. Niyati has also arranged for a large batch of pediatric medicine supplies.

KOSHISH – A Report Card

An update on Koshish from Sandeep Kochar ('93)

KOSHISH has dispensed Rs 4750 in aid over the past 4 months.

Patient 1: Rs 150 for lab investigations.

Patient 2: Rs 300 for medicines and hospital admission.

Patient 3: Rs 500 for medicines, ultrasound & hospital admission.

Patient 4: Rs 1500 for antibiotics for a 4 year old with ventilator acquired pneumonia.

Patient 5: Rs 800 for antibiotics for a 25 year old burn patient.

Patient 6: Rs 500 for head CT scan for a 2 year old with head injury following trauma.

Patient 7: Rs 800 for medicines for an 8 year old with meningo-encephalitis and respiratory failure requiring tracheostomy.

In addition, Rs 500 have been distributed to many patients for smaller expenses (labs, medicines etc).



Euphoria is a name synonymous with GMC, Chandigarh. Right from its inception in 1996, this cultural, literary and sports extravaganza has grown and evolved into a phenomenon. Over the last ten years it has been attracting delegates from medical and dental colleges from North and Central India. It has emerged as an unrivalled pedestal for medicos to showcase their talent.

This year we shall be organizing EUPHORIA 2006 from 11th to 14th February, 2006. It shall also include ALL INDIA MEDI - CRICKET 2006.

As former students of the college, we expect your full support and co-operation in the form of sponsorships and advertisement. Looking forward to a long -lasting association...

Divleen Jeji ('02 batch)
Chief Coordinator, Euphoria 2006

(Editors: GMCCOSA will be actively soliciting donations for Euphoria 2006. If you are interested in contributing, please contact us at gmccosa@yahoo.com)

EUPHORIA website:
www.euphoria2006.com

In The News...

City doc back after clinical training

Tribune News Service, Chandigarh, November 2



Dr Kamaldeep Sandhu ('91), a city-based dermatologist, has returned after undergoing clinical training at one of the UK's top dermatology centre at Manchester. During the training period, she worked with world-renowned dermatologists and updated her knowledge and skills in the management of chronic skin disorders.

She had also been invited by the European Association of Dermatologists and Venereologists to present a paper at their annual meeting held at London in October this year.

Dr Sandhu did her MD from the PGIMER, Chandigarh, and worked as a Senior Resident in the Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology, and has been awarded with various international fellowships.

Career Series

Moving to the UK: Research and Ruminare

Rohit Rambani ('92), our latest addition to the editorial board and currently a Knee Fellow, Orthopedics, Kings College Hospital, London (UK), gives his perspective on the evolving scenario for overseas doctors in the UK.

An ever increasing craze for Indian doctors to work and study abroad coupled with the increasing competition for getting a post-graduation in India, made giving PLAB and moving to the UK an alluring option in the past. The thing to realize is that unlike the US, most other countries want doctors for service and don't want career doctors. This should be kept in mind whenever any doctor tries to make a decision to go abroad for study or work with an intention of settling there. My aim of writing this article is not to discourage people from coming to the UK, but to present an insiders view of the currently existing ground level realities. Individual decisions should be made with careful deliberation and thorough research given the time, finances and overall stakes involved.

Overall things have changed drastically in the last few years. After 9/11, getting a US visa became very difficult and there was an exodus of physicians to the UK with the belief that getting into and advancement in this country was easier. However, the situation has become very difficult in the recent past. I have been personally involved in coaching students preparing for the PLAB exam for the past year and have noticed a steep fall in Indian doctors coming to UK. The primary reason for that, I believe, is a great paucity of and the struggle involved in getting a job.

To give you a good perspective, here are some numbers issued in December 2005 on behalf of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the Department of Health, the General Medical Council and the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (<http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/GuidefordoctorsnewtoUK~importantinfo>).

1. Competition for junior posts in the UK has been very high for the past 2 years but has increased further in the past 6 months.
2. There are on average 493 applicants per junior doctor advertisement. This compares to 398 per advertisement 6 months ago. One third of these advertisements are for non-training posts.
3. In the past 6 months at least 13 adverts have attracted more than 1000 applicants.

4. The number of International Medical Graduates unemployed 6 months after passing part 2 of the PLAB test has increased from 20% of those passing part 2 in January 2003 to 47% of those passing part 2 in January 2004.
5. Competition for junior posts is expected to increase further in 2006 when the number of UK graduates will rise by 20%.

There are currently more than 4000 overseas doctors sitting idle after clearing PLAB part-2 and most of them are not getting any clinical attachments, leave aside getting a job. And everybody should realize that UK needs overseas doctors as service doctors and not career doctors, meaning they just want us to do the scut-work with very limited possibilities of advancing to consultant positions.

There are a few who have achieved success and reached their desired position, but good luck and good connections usually play a major role. Since there are at least 500 plus applications for each advertised job, none of the consultants has time to go through all of them. Hence, besides being at the right place at the right time, a good recommendation or a phone call from a consultant is typically needed to land you in that coveted spot. The situation gets worse as you advance in your career.

Furthermore, the UK training system is transitioning under the 'Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) programme', which began in August 2005. Under this programme, medical graduates from UK medical schools *must* complete a 2-year 'foundation' programme before embarking upon specialist or general practice training. The first Foundation year (F1) is similar to the internship we go through after graduating from medical school, and these posts are matched to the output of the UK medical schools. Overseas doctors will therefore not be able to obtain these posts. During the second year of the Foundation training (F2), there may be 10-15% extra posts than the F1 posts, and a few overseas doctors may be able to secure these extra posts. However, these posts will be far fewer than those available currently, and will be extremely competitive. More information on the MMC programme is available at www.mmc.nhs.uk.

In the end, I would like to say that the situation very similar in other countries like Singapore and Australia, where again, they want service doctors. I would suggest all doctors planning to come abroad to consider all options and discuss the pros and cons carefully with their friends and seniors in that country before moving.

With the increasing numbers of corporate hospitals opening up in India, most doctors of Indian origin would like to come back and earn well in the private sector and have the luxuries of staying in India, which you only realize when you move abroad.

*Rohit Rambani
(92 batch)*

(Editors: The 'Career Series' section of the GMCCOSA website has been updated to include this and many other useful resources on PLAB and moving to the UK.)

English vs. Medical Language

Divyanshoo Rai Kohli ('03) had submitted this article for the 'GMCCOSA Writing Competition' held in Summer 2005.

English language and medical sciences make a strange pair indeed. Together, they have the potential of confounding the most logical minds on the planet. If the queen learnt about the collateral damage being meted out to her language, Great Britain would definitely go to war against the white coats. Consider the following:

Imagine the scenario in which a wife tells her doctor how lucky she was that she had a cardiomegalic (large hearted) husband!! It fills me with wonder what the movie character Neo (Keanu Reeves) would feel if told that the Matrix had nothing to do with a computer but could be found in the mitochondria of every cell of his body!

Biochemistry scholars need to be pitied. They have to contend with a rather tough year. On top of that, they are taught concepts which make them feel literally "senseless". I allude to genetic concepts like nonsense, mis-sense, anti-sense...doesn't quite make much sense. I wonder what would come to the mind, if a question is framed thus: write a detailed note on "nonsense".

Anatomy has a debilitating effect on the language as well. Abduction brings to mind a criminal act of kidnapping. However, the anatomist in me differs. I once shared with an acquaintance, a lawyer, that I was being taught the finer aspects of Abduction. The response was: You docs should be in the dock yourself.

The dictionary refers to elixirs as substances that maintain life indefinitely. However, the Pharmacology text considers it merely alcohol with a dash of a drug.

Channels were meant to be sources of entertainment via the television but Physiology taught me that channels extend to sodium ions as well. They seem to have traveled from the T.V. to the nerve fiber, leaving me in a daze.

I feel rather impressed that despite such confounding and muddling concepts, my analytical abilities are still in order (hopefully!).

Once, while watching NDTV, I heard the anchor telling the damaging effects of SPM on health and the need to wipe it off from the face of the earth. I felt like telling the anchor that there were things infinitely more dangerous than mere Suspended Particulate Matter!

On HBO, when Stallone said he would take on the world with a SLR, it took a while to realize that he was referring to a self-loading rifle, not a Sterile Labor Room!

All over the countryside, farmers cultivate crops. The well-heeled cultivate contacts and influential friends. Pity the poor doctor; cultivation for him is restricted to bacteria in a petridish.

If medical terminology is applied to life, a rather piquant situation arises. Party hopping politicians would be reduced to the status of metastatic tissue! An unwanted guest would be declared an infestation and a child (kid-) with weak knees (-neys) would be rushed to a nephrologist! The modern day Romeo would declare his love by claiming Juliet had a positive chronotropic effect on the heart!

During the first clinical posting, a nurse said that the doctor on duty was busy with JR. Oh! I exclaimed, has he gone off to Hollywood? What the hell has JR got to do with Hollywood, glared the irate nurse. Well, I countered, are you telling me that Julia Roberts would be lying around in some ward of GMCH? It was some time till she was breathing normally.

The gynae posting was even more bizarre. "See the patient on bed 13 - classic C. Sec". C-sec, I wondered why this sounded so familiar. Then it finally dawned, the reverse pronunciation of C sec was *very* familiar. Perhaps, I should have forgotten bed 13 and gone to bed 31- might have gotten lucky!!

However, this only half the story told. Medical science has made significant contributions to the Queen's language. It has added spice and zest to the language. The two have a lot of synergism between themselves. The propagation of medical knowledge is all the result of extensive use of English. The apt conclusion is this: The relation between English and Medicine is akin to a husband and wife, at loggerheads sometimes, but no doubt, can't do without each other too.

Divyanshoo Rai Kohli
(03 batch)

Who's Who on The Editorial Board

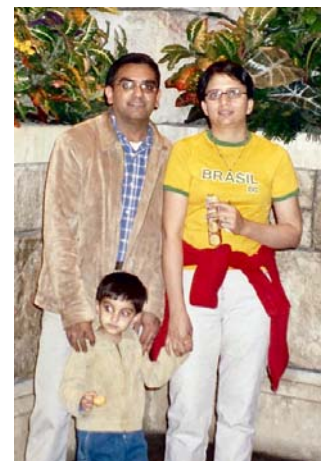
We introduce the Editorial Board of Connections, especially for the benefit of alumni from more recent batches and current students. The primary qualification of the Editors is their willingness to toil and take out time to advance GMCCOSA and Connections.



Navneet Majhail ('91), a graduate of GMC's first batch, is the architect of GMCCOSA and the 'keeper' of its website. Incidentally, he was the first entrant to GMC through the All India CBSE quota. The earlier batches might remember him as one of the

leaders of the (in)famous 2004 strike for recognition of GMC. Writing and editing come naturally to him; he was one of the editors of 'Mirch Masala' ('91 & '92 batches might recall this hand-written gossip magazine - the second and last issue of which was publicly burnt by some of the featured 'newsmakers'). He was also the lead guitarist and congo player for the boys hostel based band 'Cadavers' (the band did not last long - obviously it was too much work for the boys hostellers). After graduating from GMC, he went on to do a residency in Radiation Oncology from the AIIMS, New Delhi and Internal Medicine from Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland. He is currently a third year fellow in Hematology-Oncology at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis and is specializing in bone marrow transplantation. His wife, Inder Raj, is pursuing a residency in psychiatry (he vehemently denies that she went into this specialty to treat him!) and his spare time is spent playing with his 4-year old and trying to teach her the ways of life.

Hemender Singh ('91) also hails from the famous first batch. He was one of the famous HMT (Hammy Majhail Tuli) trio which carried the '91 batch through most of their infamous deeds and later the whole college through the GMC strike. After graduating, he joined MS Orthopedics at IGMC Shimla where he spent a good two years before moving on to the USA. He did his internship in Chicago and then completed a residency in Internal Medicine from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He is presently working



as a hospitalist at the Marshfield Clinic, Wisconsin. Hemender was one of the three premier editors of Connections. He loves writing and has reminded all the GMCites of the good old days through his memoirs of med-school days, 'GMC Chronicles'. He is pictured here with his wife, Reena, who is currently pursuing a PhD in Psychology from the University of Wisconsin and their four-year old daughter.



Rohit Rambani ('92) is the newest addition to the editorial board. The earlier batches remember him better as the CR of the '92 batch. He moved on to Government Medical College, Patiala, to pursue MS (Orthopedics) after graduating from GMCH.

He could not stay away from GMCH for long and came back as a Senior Resident in Orthopedics. He is currently a Knee Fellow at the Kings College Hospital, London, UK. Rohit brings a fresh perspective to GMCCOSA and will serve as a link between GMCOSA and alumni in the UK. He is an avid cricketer and played for the Liverpool League last season as an opening batsman. His wife Reena ('95) is also a GMC graduate and is currently pursuing MD in Microbiology from PGIMER, Chandigarh.

Sandeep Kochar ('93) is the inspiration behind KOSHISH. He was the CR of his batch and excelled as an all around sportsman during his GMC days. Curtailing his residency in internal medicine at the AIIMS, New Delhi, he moved to the US and completed a combined Internal Medicine/Preventive Medicine residency which included a degree in public health (MPH) from the Yale University. He is currently a first year fellow in Infectious Diseases at the State University of New York, Brooklyn, New York. His main interest is international health including HIV in India and other developing countries. He is pictured here with his very significant other, Preety Chawla ('94), also a GMC graduate, who is currently a first year Cardiology fellow at Beth Israel Medical Center, Manhattan, New York. They met when Preety was a first year medical student; they realized a mutual interest on the basis of



a 10 rupees wager that Preety made with a friend! After a (gloriously) prolonged courtship of almost 10 years (one year for each of those 10 rupees...wonder what might have happened had they bet Rs. 100 instead!), they finally tied the knot in 2004. Sandeep's interests include good food and wine along with cooking, traveling, reading and sports. However, nothing gets him more excited than the opportunity to give back to his alma mater, especially current students. Besides KOSHISH, he has been instrumental in developing the 'Career Series' and the mentorship program.

Divyanshoo Rai Kohli ('03) is our second new member of the Editorial Board. He is glad that his Second Prof exams are over (last month) and has displayed the courage and willingness to juggle his responsibility as an Editor with his Final Prof rotations. He has to his credit, an extensive experience in writing and editing. He has served on the editorial committees of his school magazine at St John's High School and is currently one of the editors for 'Glimpse' (official GMC magazine). He has represented GMC at various literary forums and won the all-India Best Debater award. He has also authored a book on scientists "Milestones in Science" which has been published by the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India. Besides writing, debating and quizzing, his hobbies include playing basketball & table-tennis, reading, listening to music, singing (only in the bathroom!) and going out on drives.



Manish Mehta ('97) was the co-editor of the first issue of Connections and served from on the Editorial Board from January 2004 to May 2005. His contributions will forever remain an asset for GMCCOSA and Connections.

Kudos

...to Kavita Mohindra ('91); she has been accepted for a fellowship in Electrodiagnostic Medicine and Neuromuscular Diseases at the Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, Michigan (USA). She is currently pursuing a residency in Neurology at the same hospital.

...to Punkaj Gupta ('94); he has been accepted for a fellowship in Pediatric Critical Care at the Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts (USA) starting July 2006. He is currently a resident in Pediatrics at the Miami Children's Hospital, Miami, Florida (USA).

Stork Line

Puneet ('91) and Shikha ('94) Tuli were blessed with a baby boy in September 2005.



Congrats

...to Mili Bhardwaj ('98) and Manish Thakur ('98) who got married in December 2005. They are pursuing residencies in Gynae-Obs and Transfusion Medicine, respectively, at PGIMER, Chandigarh.

...to Sunali Goyal ('96) and Punkaj Gupta ('94) (pictured below) who tied the knot on November 23rd 2005.



Album

Mini-reunion ('92 batch), November 2005; (from left to right) Tania Lamba, Pooja, Navneet Singh and Vikas Goyal. Tania is pursuing a residency in ophthalmology in the USA, Pooja is currently a senior resident in Microbiology at PGIMER Chandigarh, Navneet is a senior resident (DM) in Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine at PGIMER Chandigarh and Vikas is practicing as a Surgical Oncologist in Chandigarh.



Mini-reunion ('91 batch), December 2005;(sitting from left to right) Puneet Tuli, Nittin Mittal and Amit Monga. Sitting on the extreme right is Shikha ('94 batch), Puneet's wife. Puneet is a senior resident (MCh) in Plastic Surgery at PGIMER, Nittin is an orthopedician practicing in Barnala, Punjab, Amit is an Internal Medicine resident at Bronx VA Medical Center, New York, Shikha works as an ophthalmologist in Chandigarh.



Editors: Please send us photographs of your re-unions, parties, meetings, weddings, etc (anything) to gmccosa@yahoo.com.

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