

# Connections-09

*Bulletin of the Government Medical College Chandigarh Old Students Association (GMCCOSA)*

## Change



Once in a while, someone will ask me about why I started GMCCOSA. The one word answer is 'kida' (literally 'insect' - wonder if this word is still in vogue). For those who know what this means, I need not say any more. For those who do not know the significance of a 'kida', there aren't enough words to explain it. Nevertheless, let me try and define a 'kida'. It is a strong and irresistible impulse that comes from the heart at the spur of the moment and overrides any indications from the brain to annihilate that urge. The size of the 'kida' determines the odds against it and the effort needed to accomplish it. Examples include simple things like 'kida to bunk a class' or complicated issues like 'kida to come to the USA'. So to summarize, GMCCOSA was my 'kida' (the first website I put together is still functional – [gmccosa.tripod.com](http://gmccosa.tripod.com)). However, one of the biggest challenges of a 'kida' is that it can fizzle out as quickly as it forms, and I have to give due credit to my co-editors for helping sustain my GMCCOSA 'kida' (almost 6 years now and counting!).

We (the Editorial board) try hard to keep people connected with each other and with GMCH. This is thanks to alumni and students who send us photographs, gossip, tidbits and updates. This is our biggest encouragement and always makes us look forward to the next edition of this newsletter, since we are eager to share with others what you have shared with us. And to accomplish this, we try to be informal – there are no bylaws for GMCCOSA and we don't have any designations. There are no fees or application forms to be a member. And we represent all GMCH graduates and students wherever in the world they might be. We do get an occasional accolade from graduates of other medical colleges, and I can safely say that no other medical college in India can boast of an alumni and student network such as ours.

However, we also feel that it now time for *Change* (apologies to Barack Obama for borrowing his campaign slogan). We are keen for even greater involvement by students and alumni. As one of my co-editors lamented, we do not want Connections to be a "booklet which just a few of us use to purge out our pent up (mis)adventures". So do write to us. Do send us your thoughts and reflections. Email us your photographs. Tell us about nostalgic moments that you have experienced during and after GMCH. Give us ideas about how we can connect you even more, about how we can have GMCCOSA serve you better. Want to join the Editorial Board, send us an email. The only required qualification is the ability and interest to write and be committed to the cause of GMCCOSA – to connect GMCH alumni and students.

And while you are thinking of great ideas to make GMCCOSA even better, stay connected. Finally, accomplish your 'kidas' in this lifetime – if possible, try not to take a 'kida' to your grave!

PS: Email your ideas to [gmccosa@yahoo.com](mailto:gmccosa@yahoo.com)

*Navneet Majhail, 91 batch*

# *In conversation with Prof. C.S. Gautam*

*Dr. C.S. Gautam is Professor and the Head of the Department of Pharmacology. He also is the Director of Security Services at GMCH. Among one of the most popular teachers, Dr Gautam shares his views on GMCH and a variety of other issues.*

## ***Message from Dr Gautam***

*“Everyone should progress and shed the darkness around. We all should work for the good of humanity and students. One should shun ones arrogance and come together for the good of our institute, society, state, country and the whole world. Bring laurels to your alma mater. My best wishes to all of you!”*

***Thank you for agreeing for this talk. Tell us about yourself. What prompted you to join GMCH?***

My training was at Amritsar Medical College and PGI. I joined PGI in 1978 for my post graduation and doctorate. Till 1992 I was a Senior Research Officer after which I joined as an Associate Professor in in MGM Medical College, New Bombay. Somehow I never liked the city and moreover Prof. J.S.Chopra, the founder director principal of our college, wanted me to be the part of the faculty. So I was interviewed in Jan 93 after which I joined the institute as a reader in the Department of Pharmacology on ad-hoc basis. In this way I have associated with the college right from the first batch.

***You were among the very early teachers to come here. How was it then compared to now?***

I feel that the students of the starting batch were more dedicated towards their field. They were more attentive and focused towards their goal in life. But today with the advent of newer technology and ever increasing levels of awareness the horizons have broadened and there has been an increase in the number of options and opportunities available to the students. Second aspect is that even batch to batch variations are evident. Some batches are more focused than others. So it really depends upon ones aim in life, how well is one brought up, lure for money and finally how quickly one wants to settle down in life. Regarding faculty, well during the initial years of the college when the faculty was small there was greater cohesiveness between each other. With passing time this cohesiveness has certainly diminished. Still, there is commendable level of coordination between all faculties for the service of this institute.

***You play a very active role in managing the extra-curricular activities of the students- PLEXUS, EUPHORIA, GLIMPSE...Is it a throw-back to your own college days? Were you active in these areas back then too?***

As a student I was very much into academics. In fact the field of medicine deserves the ultimate level of zeal and dedication. But the mantra for success in medicine is to have a hobby parallel to ones profession. This in fact is the way you create a vent for your stress and tension. So I feel the need to inculcate and encourage my students to actively participate in various co-curricular events so as to act as a stress buster. Here I also don't forget to act as a mentor for my students and develop that temperament needed for a successful life.

***Doctors leaving for USA or becoming bureaucrats has been a much debated topic in the college fests. What is your take on this?***

Today there is definitely a trend amongst students to clear the USMLE and settle abroad. This is certainly disappointing. In fact with the best brains going out there cannot be good atmosphere created which can contribute to nation's development and progress. Also those who go abroad for further studies seldom feel the need to come back and change the atmosphere. I was offered jobs abroad on multiple occasions, which I felt was no mistake in denying because imparting knowledge and helping students become good doctors is what defines a good teacher. There should be an endless passion inside. Another aspect seen is the increasing desire for a red light top career. Here again, as to how will they serve and payback to their parent profession is under serious question.

***There was a very heavy demand for getting your interview. Many of your students still remember your one liner including this famous one that "whenever in emergency, start low and go slow". Students who have passed out a decade ago still want to hear from you. What you think is the reason for that?***

I think to be a good teacher you need to have that intrinsic quest to make students aware, with all the updates and recent advents in the ever growing field of pharmacology. I add on to things as and when the need arises. Also what I ensure is punctuality and dedication in imparting knowledge to my students. I am a strict academician inside the class but at the same time I am there for my students for all kind of help and protection outside the lecture theatre. *They are like my own kids to me!*

***Any particularly memorable incident that you want to share with us!***

When I joined PGI for my post-graduation I failed in my first monthly assessment test. I scored 9/100. There was another girl who scored 34/100. Mr. Ranjit Rai Chaudhry, the then director and head of department of pharmacology, called her first and asked if she wanted to continue in PGI and pursue her post graduation. She left weeping. Next was my turn and I was asked the same question which I replied that sir under your able guidance I will surely do wonders in the subject. From that night onwards, I used to sit late till 2 in the morning in the library and would make sure that I had a comprehensive margin of 10-15 marks more than the second person in every monthly exam. This was really an eye opener for me.

***Where do you see GMCH going from here in the next few years?***

GMCH is progressing very well. The first two directors have been the biggest contributors in the development of the institute. In fact Dr. Kak has been instrumental in bringing the college on the map of medical colleges in India. Although we have had ups and downs, our committed faculty under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Raj Bahadur has put the college among the top 14 medical colleges of India. I can see in him the exact replica of Dr Kak. Also the students of our college are better than any other renowned medical colleges in India, be it AIIMS, MAMC or any others. Also for the good working of the institute I feel that politics should be criticized and shunned by all.

***How do you see students vis-a-vis pharmacology? Do you feel the need to change the curriculum or method of teaching it?***

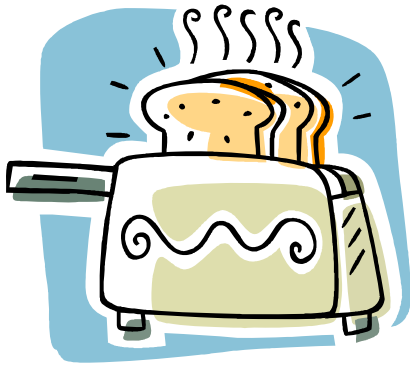
Good question! Well one should try for the ideal mixture of all the recommendations laid down by the various medical bodies. The curriculum should match to the need of pharmacology needed by students as their base for their subsequent career in medicine. One should not be an *Olympian* in prescribing newer drugs. There are a lot of examples where drugs banned in developed countries are being used indiscriminately and with irrational combinations in developing countries like ours. The quality of a good doctor lies in the art of his prescription. Pharmacology is a highly volatile subject. What I try are innovative techniques with every batch to make my subject more interesting.

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Anuj Sharma 2007 batch

# Singles and Spices

Statutory warning: this article is the outcome of the extreme angst of a starved palate.



Through centuries of evolution, man has experimented on fellow humans and himself in the quest for a better living. With the same spirit, I began my tryst (OK! It was a wrestling match)

with cooking. My experimental model was a 98 Kg apparently healthy male (Anup Kumar Singh Rajput or AKSR of '99 batch) whereas I served as the 'wild type' control. Seeing AKSR spit out the first bite of roti that I had conjured, I was sure that all experimental parameters had been met. I was, in the words of AKSR, the worst cook on the planet who could turn wheat into cardboard and rubber. Not that AKSR is any better - he is just about able to pour water from a jug into a glass. Ah! The caprices of cooking.

I feel funny that in the over 2 decades of my existence, I never learned how to cook. I can intubate a gasping patient with precision and suture sawed off skin but cannot scramble eggs! If you are in the same position, don't panic. Just read on for the dos and don'ts for novice cooks!

**Don'ts:** The following stunts have been performed by professional stunt personnel - do not attempt at home or unsupervised.

- Don't go for a swim while the pizza is still in the oven. Even if you enjoy the taste of charcoal, it is a nice idea to stick around till

the cooking is over.

- Just because chicken can be cooked in the microwave, does not mean that eggs can follow suit. It is a strain on the neck to clean the yolk off the insides of the microwave. The smell does not help either.
- Don't add spices (although some will suggest otherwise). Studies conducted in labs show that spices produce a sensation of pain on the tongue. Studies conducted in my state-of-the-art kitchen show that it causes people (read me) to sweat.
- Most important: don't hope for mummy-ke-banaye-paranthe, at least not in the US. Those days are over!

**Do's:** Those who can - do. Those who can't - teach!

- Befriend local desis (especially married ones): This will ensure an irregular supply of excellent food. Also, you might pick up easy to cook recipes (pass them on to me!).
- Get married: No! Your wife won't cook for you. But she will ensure that you learn how to make excellent paranthas, Sanjeev Kapoor style.
- Stock up fruits and pre-cooked meals.
- Learn to make noodles.
- Understand that the expiry date printed on the food is not just for decoration.

If all above fail: Start writing for Connections - that is food for thought.

Happy eating!

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*Divyanshoo Rai Kohli (2003 Batch)*

*Tied in marital bliss:*

*Kanwaljit Singh ('99) with Aparna Kohli in August, 09*

*Malika Minocha ('99) in 2009*

## *Residency and Fellowship Updates:*

*Maneesh Gupta ('94) has matched for a fellowship in Gastroenterology at the University of Rochester, Rochester, New York, USA*

*Advitya Malhotra ('95) will start his Advanced Endoscopy Fellowship in ERCP/endoscopic ultrasound at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA) in 2010*

*Harkirat Saggi ('97) has joined a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, USA*



### **2000 batch updates (Thanks to Rajan Goyal):**

- Abhinav Gupta: Junior Resident (MD), Medicine at KGMC, Lucknow
- Esha Sethi: Junior Resident (MD), Anesthesia at GMCH, Chandigarh
- Jitendeep Singh: Senior Resident (MCH), Cardiothoracic surgery at PGIMER, Chandigarh
- Mandeep Kumar: Resident, Internal Medicine, University of Connecticut, Hartford, Connecticut, USA
- Manish Garg: Resident, Internal Medicine, Harlem Hospital, Columbia University Affiliate, New York, USA
- Munish Aggarwal: Senior Resident, Psychiatry at PGIMER, Chandigarh
- Neha Chabra: Senior Resident, Radiodiagnosis I at PGIMER Chandigarh
- Niyati Mahajan: Resident, Pediatrics, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, USA
- Ritu Kulhara: Resident, Internal Medicine, Kaiser Permanent Santa Clara Medical Center, Santa Clara, California, USA
- Romika Dhar: Senior Resident, Psychiatry at GMCH, Chandigarh
- Shikha Tandon: Fellow, Emergency Medicine at Max Hospital, New Delhi
- Vinod Kumar: Junior Resident (MD), Community Medicine at PGIMS, Rohtak
- Garima Shivhare: Junior Resident (MD) Anatomy at GMCH, Chandigarh

### **2003 batch updates:**

- *Ashish Bansal has joined as PG JR in Ophthalmology at PGIMER, Chandigarh*
- *Navdeep Gupta has joined as PG JR in Orthopedics at PGIMS, Rohtak*
- *Rashi Sarna has joined as PG JR in Anesthesia at GMCH, Chandigarh*
- *Vikas Gupta has joined as PG JR in Internal Medicine at PGIMS, Rohtak*
- *Kusum Lata has joined as PG JR in Obstetrics/Gynecology at PGIMER, Chandigarh*
- *Bhawna Gupta has joined as PG JR in Anesthesia at DMCH, Ludhiana*
- *Harshabad Singh has joined as Post Doctoral Associate at the Simches Research Center, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston (USA)*

## *Stork bites:*

*Puneet ('91) and Shikha ('93) Tuli were blessed with son Aryan (pictured here)*

*Adheesh ('93) and Kiran ('93) Agnihotri were blessed with daughter Anya*

*Vikas ('93) and Nancy ('93) Sharotri were blessed with twins*



## *'Bees and Bizarre'*

Inspired by the 1991 batch to have a fete “bees saal baad”, we the 99ers, decided to fly the crazy miles in our own buzzing way; albeit with an insignificant difference that it will take us a decade more to get to the count of “bees.” The bellies of the quadra who made it to the grand ole town of Philly were not really pots (yet another insignificant difference), but all of us did have some potboilers that we could share.



We all realized that although the counts of eligible bachelors were fast dwindling, Channa down, Kattu and Sarao almost there, and only me to go, the ability to rock-on the bachelor way was still agile... and... to equiponderate in the absence of yanki's, Megha-"madhuri"-Vaid-Chauhan (naam hee kaafi hai!) joined us yakuza. As is typical for Punjabis, and hence us, most eidetically appealing recalls are inspired by gastronomically gratifying experiences; we chatted flirtatiously about our indulgences in curves and furls of chocolate and the valleys and dips of creams at the Golden Bakery, 38. The lush green mounds by the French Creek, PA provided space for more such savoring indulgences, this time in chicken tikkas "fresh from the tandoor". The Lake was serene, our eyes weren't! ... The sights around only added to the taste.

I still carry the name Bizz but this time around we all were bees, hovering around the blossoms; and our escalation from there-on was a tad bit bizarre. That sun-bathed day, those teasers, the jokes on hair and baldness alike, the fight over last strip of glazed chicken, the unleashed tongues – any sophisticated saint would have thought of us as smitten by hormones - and he would not have been wrong. Frenzy was served a-la-carte as the evening drew another chica et-La-Chiquita. More leg-pulling and more slap-stick – the married got abrasive – the not yet married retaliated slimily. The foam of the spirit rose high from the essence of unity – "champagne" style!

The bizarre day gave way to a sane night, smooth music, savages turning sages, drunken singing gospels and guiding apparently mislead – the holy water of Shiraz was showing stage III of its effect – some more chit chat and the sunshine next noon knocked the doors to tell – we were running late for our flights back home. The good-byes followed... the phones, emails, and the memories keep going.... only to meet again, this time, with pots and "bees saal baad".

[PS: So, Chana - Veeraiish Chauhan; Kattu - Kanwaljit Singh; Sarao - Ravjot Singh Sarao; Megha i- Veeraiish's wife and I happened to attend this crazy re-union]

Kiddan mitro !!



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*Charanjeet Singh, 1999 batch*

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Editorial board: Navneet Majhail (g1'), Minneapolis, USA; Hemender Vats (g1'), Marshfield, USA; Sandeep Kochar (g3'), Brooklyn, USA; Charanjeet Singh (g9'), Minneapolis, USA; Divyanshoo Rai Kohli (2K3'), Minneapolis, USA; Anuj Sharma (2K7'), Chandigarh, INDIA