

Obituary



Dr. R. J. Maneksha

Dr. Rustom Jamshed Maneksha (1920-2004) second child of Dr. Jamshed Maneksha, a General Practitioner and Mrs. Goolbai J. Maneksha was born and brought up in Mumbai, completing MBBS at the Grant Medical College in 1944, FRCS (Eng.) in 1946 and also F.A.C.S. (U.S.A.) and F.I.C.S.

On his return to India in the late 40s he was appointed as a General Surgeon at the Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital. He worked with Dr. R. G. Talwalkar, and with his blessing he selectively performed only plastic surgical operations. He mentioned in his memoirs "I am deeply grateful to Dr. R. G. Talwalkar, with whom I have been associated since 1949 and who allowed me unlimited scope at the Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital to develop this branch of surgery". In the 50s he designed the manual metallic dermabrader to treat smallpox scars (Figure 1).

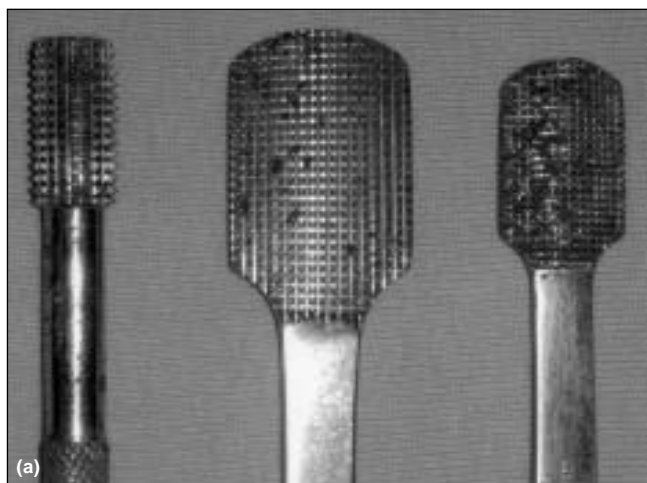


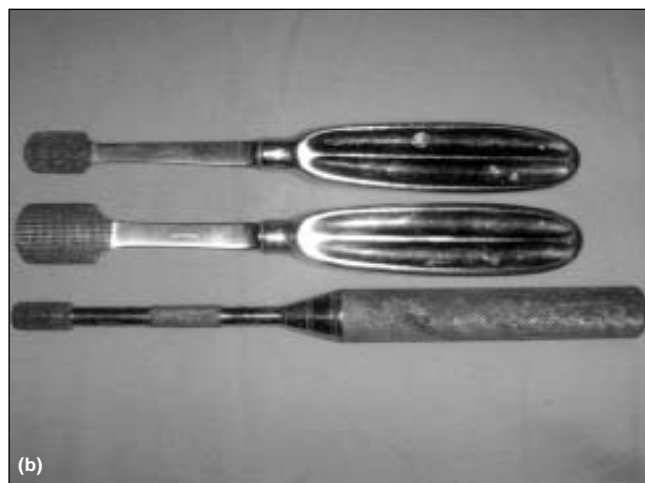
Figure 1: (a) and (b) Metal Dermabrader

He finally established and headed the unit of Plastic Surgery at G T Hospital in 1964 till he retired in 1975. The unit was ably taken over by Dr. B. M. Daver.

In 1958 he started the Plastic Surgery Dept at Bombay Hospital and after training in Japan he introduced Micro vascular Surgery in Jan 1977 with Dr. S. R. Tambwekar. He was also on the faculty of the Railway Hospital and the Poddar Hospital.

He served at INHS Ashwini, treating the 1965 war-wounded and other plastic surgical cases. In 1976 he was honored with the title of Surgeon Commodore.

He presented his work at international conferences and took active part in organizing various, national and international conferences. He obtained first-hand



guidance from: Sir Archibald McIndoe, Tord Skoog, Sir Harold Gillies, Rainsford Mowlem, Bengt Johansen, Paul Tessier, Yves Gerard Illouz, Eric Peet, Hugo Obwegeser, Seiichi Ohmori to name a few. He has been described as “a pioneering surgeon who visualized the importance of the specialty, went abroad to train under giants in the field and returned to India to practice and teach the specialty”.

He had a keen interest in cricket and golf. To quote him, “Doing Plastic Surgery can be compared very much to playing golf! Incidentally both bring out the best in you. On the golf course you plan each hole in advance after due study, then start on the tee after selecting the proper club, try to avoid all the hazards and if entrapped overcome them and finally reaching the undulating putting green reach the final goal.....”

He maintained photographic records from 1948 and authored two well-illustrated books “Plastic Surgery in the Tropics, 1965” and “Colour Atlas of Cleft Lip Surgery, 1986”. His earliest articles have appeared in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in 1960: Dermabrasion Therapy for Scars, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Vol 25, No. 6, p. 615-7, June 1960 and British

Journal of Plastic Surgery 1961. He wrote the foreword in Tokvam, O., Maxillo-Facial Injuries 1965, a chapter in Surgical Rehabilitation in Leprosy by McDowell, F. and Enna, C.D. 1974, his letter is included in Millard's Cleft Craft (1976), he was an International Reviewer - Cleft Palate Journal (USA), to list just a few of his numerous contributions.

He was very jovial, fun-loving, good-natured, soft-spoken, co-operative, adjusting, very patient, and punctual, his surgery was precise and he never wasted intra-operative time. He was a thorough gentleman, always considerate of the patients' affordability and available to all economic strata and very humane.

In April 1946 he married Miss. Roda Reporter, by whom he had two sons one is presently a Cardio-Thoracic Surgeon and the other an Anesthesiologist in the USA. He had a happy married life till 1997 when Roda's demise left him listless. He breathed his last at Bachha Nursing Home on July 6th 2004. With his passing away we have lost one of our earliest pioneers.

Kumkum Khadalia

Consultant Plastic Surgeon, Bombay Hospital, India.