

Icon of the Issue

Dr. Behman Minoo Daver (1939–2015)

Dr. Daver was one of the very early formally trained plastic surgeons in this country under the tutelage of N.H. Antia at the JJ Group of Hospitals and Grant Medical College in Bombay now Mumbai.^[1] He was also most probably the first one in Bombay University to pass with a distinction.^[2]

He followed this with a stint in the UK where he trained at Bristol, one of his contemporaries fondly referred to him as the 'last Englishman' in India. He then managed to get the Millard Cleft Fellowship in Miami, probably the first Indian to do so. During dinner one day, he regaled us with a deadpan face about his interview with Millard. He was asked about sports. Apparently, Millard insisted that he would only take fellows if they were active sportsmen. Dr. Daver replied that he was a keen swimmer and Millard invited him home for a swim in the ocean the next day. He was greeted by a butler and told to strip to his swimming trunks and join the family on the beach. Out on the beach, Millard made him ride water skis from which he promptly fell down. Millard then said 'I gotta show you.' Dr. Daver was asked to drive the sped boat, and the great Millard was riding the skis behind. Not knowing how to manage the speed he promptly managed to put Millard in the water. The fellow sitting next to him muttered 'boy are you in trouble now', however the great man did not take offence at all and finally offered the fellowship.

After his stint abroad, he came back to Mumbai and joined the JJ Group of Hospitals again, first as a pool officer and subsequently as Hon. Associate Professor. He went on to become the senior most Hon. Professor in the JJ Group of Hospitals at the end of his career.



Dr. Behman Minoo Daver
29th June 1939 - 25th August 2015

He put all his knowledge and skill to very good use both in public service as well as his private practice



Figure 1: Dr. Daver at Tavada Cleft Camp with author and Dr. Anil Deshpande



Figure 2: Addressing 19th APSICON 1986, Mumbai

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Figure 3: (a and b) At IPRAS, APC Congress 2005 in Mumbai

for four decades and was a much-loved teacher and kind examiner (the author was passed by him in 1986, which explains the epithet!). He did very interesting work on Leprosy with Dr. NH Antia as also a very large series of hypospadias repair running into hundreds with the technique of J.C. van Der Mullen; in fact, Dr. Wadhwa wrote his M.Ch. thesis for Bombay University based on this work, the fistula rate was negligible. He was also an early proponent of Potter's technique in the cleft rhinoplasty, and several people learned it from him including me [Figure 1]. Finally, his work with palate lengthening leaving the diamond defect behind the hard-soft junction in the nasal layer was pioneering at the time with very low fistula incidence.

Besides his fine reconstructive work, he was among the early few to establish an aesthetic surgery practice. He soon earned a reputed clientele base and dozens of plastic surgeons went up to him as he was ever willing to teach and demonstrates the art and science. His annual Rhinoplasty course was always very well attended. At a time when knowledge of aesthetic surgery was jealously guarded, he was willing to share it freely.

Prof. Daver published several articles and authored books, which are highly cited. Prominent among them includes reconstruction of nasal defects in Clinics in Plastic Surgery, a book on surgical management of deformities of leprosy, handbook of plastic surgery and several in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and British Journal of Plastic Surgery. At the time when the contribution to scientific publications in the country was meagre, Dr. Daver's publications received 146 citations. He was the only Indian clinician to join and contribute to the WHO - international collaborative research on craniofacial anomalies and this author helped him conduct a nationwide survey on clefts with eight colleagues from eight centres. Dr. K. Sridhar from Chennai then extended it to do a full state survey - a landmark achievement, but it

started with that quest of his and a desire to show India was up there and could be on par at the WHO.

He was also a very devoted member of the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India (APSI), serving in the executive as a member, treasurer, president and trustee [Figure 2]. He also became the Secretary General of the Asian Pacific section of the International Confederation of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery, perhaps the first Indian to do so [Figures 3a and b].

Dr. Daver was a fine surgeon, a great teacher, a leader in APSI, exemplary orator and last but not the least a devoted husband and father. This tribute as Icon of the Issue from the Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery is richly deserved.

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Conflicts of interest

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