
Connections

Bulletin of the Government Medical College Chandigarh Old Students Association

The World Beyond GMCH

I can sum up everything about the world beyond GMCH in 2 words: It exists! On a serious note, stepping out of GMCH on January 1, 2009 was almost cataclysmic for my batch buddies and myself. Suddenly, with an almost overwhelming force 'the world was upon us'. As I traversed across the oceans to the US to pursue a career in research, a disconcerting truth hit me - my cocoon of society and safety had dissipated. I alternated between feeling vulnerable and excited (ghar-wale ghar nahi to humein kisi ka darr nahi) as I took my first tentative steps towards an independent life. My friend Rahul Rai who followed a similar career path described the predicament succinctly 'Abhi pehla kadam rakha hee tha ki duniya ne band bajana shuru kar diya'!

The world beyond GMCH melted away my identities and forged a new one that was broad, all-encompassing and least specific. During our time in medical school we belong to rather narrow, almost provincial identities: Table 1/2/3/4/5 (Anatomy dissection hall), A/B batch (Pharmacology and Pathology labs), B batch (clinics), 2003 batch (year of joining) among others. Once outside, we are known instead by our city (Chandigarh) or profession (physician). In my case, I was popularly known as 'the Indian guy' or 'the Asian guy' at my workplace. While this was never said maliciously, I was mildly amused by being recognized by something as 'generic' as my nationality rather than something more 'specific'. It made me realize that often identities create fortifications that serve to divide us.

The experiences in GMCH had taught me many lessons of life: the value of hard work and lasting friendships, the ability to withstand adversity and enjoy my struggles. Life in the US showed me that my education was, as ever, still incomplete. I learned about managing my finances and time schedules, enjoying working with peers from widely varied cultural backgrounds, even learning the fine art of cooking! Most critically, I learned to accept and perhaps even embrace failure- something I had not really faced before.

I tasted financial independence, and debt, for the first time ever. It was then that I comprehended both the importance and irrelevance of money. Money is important for obvious reasons of fiscal security and yet, after a breaching reasonable threshold, it becomes almost inconsequential in the quest of professional satisfaction and personal bliss.

So how would I describe the world beyond GMCH? It is fun, full of challenges and is a phenomenal classroom. I learned to appreciate the small joys coming my way. I passionately enjoyed my work and life in USA. I rediscovered my lost love for poetry and developed a taste for ghazals and soft music. I nostalgically missed being in India, surrounded by family and friends while eating home-cooked delicacies.

I must place on record that throughout these electrifying times, the alumni of our college gave me their unstinted and unwavering support. Dr. Navneet Majhail ('91), Dr. Adheesh and Dr. Kiranjot (both '93) and their families kept nostalgia at bay while offering an understanding ear. Charanjeet ('99) was a friend, guide, philosopher, critic, advisor and most importantly, a long-suffering chauffeur in the cold Minnesota winters.

In conclusion: folks enjoy your golden days in GMCH. This time is irretrievable, immeasurable and precious. Always remember to be connected with one another and keep in mind that beyond the gates of GMCH is an adventure that would put any novel to shade. Good luck!

Divyanshoo R. Kohli ('03)

(This article will appear in 'Glimpse-2010', the official student magazine of GMCH)

Update on Pinjari



In 2008, a young boy from Andhra Pradesh had come to GMCH to pursue MBBS. Pinjari Chingisaheb, a national bravery award winner, came from a family of fishermen and this was his second ever journey outside the confines of his village. He had once come to New Delhi to receive his bravery award from the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. This time, he would be coming for a bigger challenge: MBBS!

Pinjari's family had to mortgage their utensils to pay for the rail journey to Chandigarh. When he reached GMCH with his grandfather, he was barefoot and slept on the pavement outside the boys' hostel. He barely understood Hindi and English and was still to learn the existence of Punjabi as a language. Anup Singh ('99) took care of Pinjari and managed the essentials like lodging, food and books. The GMCCOSA took the initiative to spread the word about Pinjari's plight. Soon help started pouring in from India and abroad.

Today, things are looking much better. Sandeep Kochar's ('93) generosity ensured that Pinjari could pay the fees of the university exams, his hostel room and mess. Anup's efforts prodded the Government of India to pay Pinjari a modest monthly stipend. GMCH also halved his annual tuition fees. Charanjeet ('99) donated his books and some students of 2003 batch sponsored mattresses, pillows, quilts, shoes, clothes, stethoscope and a bag for Pinjari.

Pinjari enjoys respect among his peers and teachers for his focused approach, the immense effort he puts in towards his academics and for his 100% attendance. His fluency in Hindi and English has improved vastly and he has shown a flair for athletics as well. I visited his room in the hostel and saw that the walls were decorated with hand-drawn figures of the cerebral vascular supply, innervation of the arm and abstruse biochemical cycles. This was a far cry from the times when Angelina Jolie was the reigning deity gazing down from the walls in the boys' hostel.

The road ahead for him is laid out. He wants to continue to excel academically and clear his second prof. exams with excellent marks. The next year shall be critical as he will start his formal interaction with patients. He wishes to further improve his communication skills and occasionally visit his parents as well.

As always, the GMCCOSA has assured him of all help possible at our end. When required, we would be asking everyone to chip in with whatever resources they find available. We wish Pinjari great success.

Divyanshoo R Kohli ('03)

In Conversation with Dr. Rajeev Sharma



Message for students

Feel free to share your problems with us. We are like family and the recently started mentorship program is a program that you should benefit from. Be disciplined in your approach towards your profession and do well in life.

Message for alumni

Keep in touch with each other and with the faculty as well. We would love to meet our old students. I would also ask you to revive your old endeavor 'KOSHISH' which was of great help for the patients. I am more than willing to render all possible help at my end. GOOD LUCK!

Tell us something about yourself and your early education?

I completed my M.B.B.S. in 1987 from Pt. B.D. Sharma P.G.I.M.S. Rohtak (known earlier as GMC Rohtak). In August 1994, I completed my MS in General Surgery from the same institute. On November 22, 1994 joined as a senior resident in GMCH. Prof. MS Sekhon, who was my guide during my M.S., was instrumental in bringing me here. Since then, GMCH and I have been growing together.

What prompted you to join GMCH?

Essentially, I came here because of Dr. Sekhon. GMCH was also the first government institute to start Laparoscopic and Minimal Invasive Surgery in North India. This was an added incentive and I am glad to have trained under Dr Sekhon.

Tell us about those early days and the challenges that were there....

It was a difficult time as we didn't have much infrastructure. We started in General Hospital-16 where the atmosphere of camaraderie was missing. We had to be very careful in our daily working. All of us wanted our own hospital as that instills a feeling of belonging and camaraderie. Still we took it as a challenge as we had in our minds that we were in the process of building something for the future. We were lucky that Prof. Kak supported us and exhorted us to buy the best equipment. People were proud of the state-of-art medical college. As I mentioned before, initially we were ahead of even the PGIMER in the realm of Laparoscopic surgery and led the research in this area in north India.

....and the good bits that are not found anymore.

Since I am one of the oldest faculty members here, I can definitely see one change. Over the years, the interaction between the students and teachers has reduced. We used to have evening classes during the time of earlier batches. Students used to come with their problems and the atmosphere was like a family. Now, may be the internet has come in the way or perhaps I'm getting old (laughs) but definitely the students have withdrawn from us. The college, however, has grown at a phenomenal pace and has earned an excellent reputation.

What is your view about undergraduate students pursuing research projects?

The problem we face is that post-graduate courses have still not started. So, everybody, from residents to consultants is burdened with the work. I know this is not a robust excuse but still is an issue. We, however, welcome students interested in pursuing research projects.

Do you feel that students fear surgery or surgeons?

I always tell to my students that not everyone should opt for surgery. It is very difficult to cope up with the stress. We have to be strict and ruthless (hope the word doesn't put me in trouble!) because a clerk can undo a mistake in file, but a doctor cannot. We save lives and for that we have to be 100% dedicated. Once you err, it's difficult to correct it. The strictness is essential to instill professionalism and discipline.

There is a perception that despite the strictness on the professional side, the department of surgery, especially you, is inherently student friendly. Dr. Robin Kaushik and you are often seen at Plexus and Euphoria cheering the participants.

As a student, I was scared of my teachers. So despite the professional strictness and stress on punctuality and discipline, once outside the class, I like interacting with the students in a friendlier manner. They should feel at home with me. I have judged 'Made For Each Other' & Mr. & Ms. Euphoria for the past 10 years and think I now deserve a sabbatical/ retirement (laughs...)

How can the clinical teaching be improved?

I always encourage my students to raise questions even if they consider it to be stupid. I have observed that students often avoid taking cases. Although everyone takes the path of least resistance but learning through clinical cases is optimum. I feel that some portion of the blame rests with the faculty as well. I recommend that students should attend evening clinics and inform the teachers a day in advance about the case they intend to discuss. This shall ensure that the teacher is well prepared for the class the next day.

Any news about MS/ DNB courses?

We are very hopeful of starting MS Surgery from next year. All the technicalities and requirements regarding experience have been fulfilled. We currently have 2 DNB seats and are sending letter to MCI for inspection. We have 5 eligible post graduate teachers and are hoping to get at least 2-3 seats from the next session.

Any particular memory that stands out?

On 21st November 1997 when my senior residency ended, I was reluctant to leave GMCH. I went to Prof. Kak's office. At that time, doctors never had to take any prior appointment to meet the Director. He told me straight away that he already knew about this and made efforts to keep me at GMCH. I was humbled that someone as senior as Prof. Kak made such efforts to help a puny little SR. I felt that my hard work had paid off. I ultimately ended up as a consultant via the UPSC.

Are you in favor of doctors going abroad?

I think that one should go abroad to pursue higher education but then come back after getting trained. No doubt that the infrastructure and work-environment is better abroad but practicing at 'home' should be the ultimate goal.

Anuj Sharma ('07)
Divyanshoo R Kohli ('03)

From the Message Board

GMCH has started a new cancer registry for its patients. The initiative is being handled jointly by the Departments of Radiotherapy and Community Medicine.

Vaani Mehta (2007 batch) won an award for her poster at MEDICON 2010 organized by PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Coimbatore. The study, under the guidance of Dr. VK Saini, analyzed factors influencing diagnostic yields and complication rates in CT-guided FNAC from pulmonary lesions.

Construction of the new E-Block is in full swing at the main hospital building. The 9 storey building will house the basic sciences departments of GMCH that are currently operating from Sarai building. Snaps can be seen on Sandeep Sarpal's blog (<http://sarpal.wordpress.com/2010/05/31/a-new-block/>).

Gagandeep Singla (2002) has cleared the civil services exam and will join the Indian Police Services. He will soon begin his training at Mussorie and Hyderabad, India.

'Plexus 2010' was organized in GMCH by the 2008 batch.

GMCCOSA welcomes the 2010 batch of MBBS students.

A 'Surgical Technology Learning Center' is coming up at the Department of Surgery under the supervision of Dr. Rajeev Sharma. The aim is to train medical students in the art of applying sutures and orienting them to some basic surgical techniques used in the surgical wards and emergency. It is hoped that the training will stand the students in good stead once they enter internship.

GMCCOSA Organizes Talk on USMLE



In an effort to orient current students to the application process for the USMLE, Dr. Navneet Majhail ('91, pictured) gave a talk in GMCH. The talk, focused on an entire gamut of issues pertaining to residency training in the USA. Anuj ('07) and his friends from the first year put in great effort in making arrangements for the talk and Aakash, Dushyant and Shubhi (all '04) chipped in with their inputs. Sandeep Sarpal's blog has an interesting account of the talk (<http://sarpal.wordpress.com>). The presentation is available on our website (www.gmccosa.org).

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Obituary: Puneet Daroch ('03)

It is with a very heavy heart that I pen down these last words for my friend Puneet Daroch. He passed away in July while on a pilgrimage to Amarnath in the upper reaches of Kashmir.

Puneet came to GMCH in the summer of 2003 for pursuing MBBS. He was an affable person and never held malice towards anyone. A testimony to that is his popularity among students across a wide spectrum of batches in GMCH. He was particularly close to Kynta ('03), Himanshu ('02) and Shambhu ('99). He had a flair for adventure and with Reuben Kynta had many memorable escapades across North India. Sadly those will now be relegated to realms of nostalgic memories.

'Daroch' as he was popularly called, was known to be a passionate friend. He could always be counted on to lend a helping hand whenever needed. It is difficult to associate such a tragedy with him.

His sudden and extremely unfortunate demise has jolted all his friends and well wishers. We commiserate with his parents and brother who must now accept the permanence of his absence. We also ask everyone to remain cautious in everyday life and take adequate precautions while out alone. Keep in touch with each other and do not hesitate in asking for help.

Goodbye Puneet. We will miss you and shall pray for you. Go in peace.



Puneet (above, extreme right) on his first day at GMCH in 2003

Obituary: Bhawna Dhiman ('08)

*You're one in a Million,
Yeah! That's what you are,
You're one in a Million,
You're a shooting star.
May be someday we'll see you'
Before you make us cry,
You'll know we tried to reach you,
But you were much too high.*

-Guns 'n' Roses

Described as a very caring & helpful person, Bhawna (right) will be missed by her friends and colleagues. She passed away on June 8, 2010. We all pay our tributes to the departed soul and wish for peace and courage for her bereaved family.





Farewell: Prof. Balbir Singh

Dr. Balbir Singh retired as the Head of the Department of Anatomy where he served for over a decade. He also served as the Professor In-Charge of Academics and was a member of the Post-Graduate Studies Committee of GMCH. He was an exceptionally gifted teacher and a very able administrator. He will be missed by his students and colleagues. The GMCCOSA wishes Dr. Balbir a happy post-retirement life.

Congratulations to ...

Jitendeep Singh ('00) and Bhumika Bisht ('02) on their wedding.

Manishi Jindal ('01) on her engagement.

Niha Chakraborty ('01) on her marriage.

Rahul Kataria ('01) on his marriage to Esha.

Vishawdeep Kaur ('01) on her engagement.

Neha Goyal ('02) on her engagement.

Sabina Bansal ('02) on her marriage.

Ekawali Gupta ('03) on her engagement.



Residency & Fellowship Updates

Adheesh Agnihotri (93), fellowship in Cardiology, Maine Medical Center, Maine, USA

Ashish Pal Saini (97), fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology, Penn State Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, PA, USA

Nishant Puri (98), fellowship in Gastroenterology, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA, USA

Bhawna Bhasin (00), fellowship in Nephrology, John's Hopkins University, Maryland, USA

Mandeep Kumar (00), fellowship in Pulmonary Medicine & Critical Care, University of Medicine & Dentistry, New Jersey, USA

Jyoti Brar (01), fellowship in Nephrology, USA

Shikha Gupta (01), fellowship in Pulmonary Medicine & Critical Care, Indiana University, Indiana, USA

Surbhi Saini (01), fellowship in Pediatric Hematology & Oncology, Children National Medical Center, Washington DC, USA

Vaibhav Ahuja (01), resident, Orthopedics (MS), Maharashtra

Vikram Jassal (01), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India

Amit Bansal (02), resident, Surgery (MS), GMC&RH Patiala, India

Amrita (02), resident, Ophthalmology (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India

Anubha Bhatti (02), resident, Ophthalmology (MS), GMC & RH Patiala, India

Anudeep Jafra (02), resident, Anesthesia (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India

Arshdeep Kaur (02), resident, Dermatology (MD), PGIMS Rohtak, India

- Bakul Kocchar (02), resident, Obstetrics & Gynecology (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Barjinder Singh (02), resident, Anesthesia (MD), GMC&RH Patiala, India
- Bhumika Bisht (02), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Chakshu Bansal (02), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Divleen Jeji (02), MBA student, Symbiosis Institute of Management, Pune, India
- Geetika Aggarwal (02), student of D.M.R.D., D.Y. Patil Institute, Pune, India
- Geetika Sharma (02), resident, Pathology (MD), LHMC New Delhi, India
- Mandeep Kaur (02), resident, Microbiology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Mandeep Sodhi (02), resident, Pulmonary Medicine (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Manu Gupta (02), resident, Orthopedics (MS), GMC Kanpur, India
- Mitesh Bedi (02), resident, Surgery (MS), SMS Jaipur, India
- Munish Sharma (02), resident, Surgery (MS), LHMC, New Delhi, India
- Neha Goyal (02), resident, ENT (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Payal Mittal (02), resident, Radiology (MD), GMCH&RH Patiala, India
- Poonam Bakhar (02), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Preeti Behl (02), resident, Microbiology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Puneet Sachdeva (02), resident, Transfusion Medicine (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Sabina bansal (02), resident, ENT (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Sandeep Singh Sarpal (02), resident, Community Medicine (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Saurabh Uppal (02), resident, Pediatrics (MD), GMC Amritsar, India
- Shaveta Bhayana (02), resident, Ophthalmology (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Shilpy Singla (02), resident, Pediatrics (MD), LHMC New Delhi, India
- Suchit Khanduja (02), resident, Anesthesia (MD), IGMC Shimla, India
- Aditya Gupta (03), DNB Surgery, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi, India
- Ekawali Gupta (03), resident, Gynecology & Obstetrics (MS), IGMC Shimla, India
- Kamlesh Kumari (03), resident, Anesthesia (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Manisha Kataria (03), resident, Ophthalmology (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Neha Chauhan (03), resident, ENT (MS), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Nishant Saini (03), resident, Transfusion Medicine (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Reuben Lamiaki Kynta (03), resident, Surgery (MS), Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi, India
- Ruby Jain (03), resident, Microbiology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Sachin Garg (03), resident, Transfusion Medicine (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Shruti Akku (03), resident, Microbiology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Kanchi Khurana (04), resident, Gynecology & Obstetrics (MS), Allahabad, India
- Kanika Arora (04), researcher, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, USA
- Prashast Jain (04), MBA student, IIFT, New Delhi, India
- Shaija Goel (04), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India
- Sudivya Sharma (04), resident, Anesthesia (MD), PGIMS Rohtak, India
- Swati Bindal (04), Diploma student, Radio-diagnosis, IGMC Shimla, India
- Tripti (04), resident, Pathology (MD), GMCH Chandigarh, India

Stork Bites

Tina ('98) and Aditya Malhotra ('96) were blessed with a son 'Veer'.

Natinder and Ashish Saini ('97) were blessed with a daughter 'Seher'.

Whereabouts

Thanks to Rajan Goyal ('00) for providing these updates:

Ashish Khanna ('98), Resident, Anesthesia, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio, USA

Ravi Kant Gupta ('98), Asst. Commissioner Income Tax, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Rupinder Kaur ('98), Senior Resident, Anesthesia, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Chirag Ahuja ('99), Senior Resident (DM), Neuro-Radiology, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Neeraj Gupta ('99), Senior Resident (DM), Neonatology, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Purva Khandelwal ('99), Senior Resident, Anesthesia, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Ankur Gupta ('00), Senior Resident (DM), Cardiology, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Anuradha Bansal ('00), Senior Resident, Pediatrics, MAMC, New Delhi

Avneep Aggarwal ('00), Senior Resident, Anesthesia, PGIMER, Chandigarh

Gaurav Saini ('00), Senior Resident, Orthopedics, PGIMS, Rohtak, Haryana

Guneet Sarai ('00), Resident, Internal Medicine, Good Samaritan Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Gunjan Kaul ('00), Health Advisor, Abbott India, New Delhi

Megha Arora ('00), Senior Resident, Biochemistry, LHMC, New Delhi

Mohit Bansal ('00), Fellowship, Ophthalmology, Sadguru Netra Chikitsalaya, Chitrakoot, Madhya Pradesh

Rajan Goyal ('00), Senior Product Manager, Religare Technologies, Noida, UP

Rajani Rangray ('00), Fellowship, University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Rajiv Goyal ('00), Senior Resident, Orthopedics, PGIMS, Rohtak, Haryana

Saurav Bhardwaj ('00), Resident, MCEM, Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad

Shashank Shekhar ('00), Physician Researcher, Neurology, Helsinki University Central Hospital, Helsinki, Finland

Sidhharath Aggarwal ('00), Senior Resident, Orthopedics, GMCH, Chandigarh

Sushant Khanduri ('00), Senior Resident, Pulmonary Medicine

Abhishek Kapoor ('01), Junior Resident (MD), Psychiatry, GMCH, Chandigarh

Mona Galhotra ('01), Territory Sales Manager, India Medtronic Ltd., New Delhi

Bhumika Bisht ('02), Junior Resident (MD), Pathology, GMCH, Chandigarh

Divleen Jeji ('02), MBA student, SCMHRD, Pune, Maharashtra

Saurabh Uppal ('02), Junior Resident (MD), Pediatrics, GMC, Amritsar, Punjab

Shilpy Singla ('00), Junior Resident (MD), Pediatrics, LHMC, New Delhi

Krishan Yogesh Sawhney ('03), Junior Resident (MD), Anesthesia, DMC, Ludhiana, Punjab

Rahul Sharan ('00), Medical Officer, Indian Army, Ambala Cantt, Haryana

Mini-reunions



2003 batch, Chandigarh.

2004 batch, Chandigarh.



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