

In Memoriam

Ajit Kumar Padhy



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On the 22nd of August 2013, Professor Ajit Kumar Padhy passed away from massive heart attack. The news that such an energetic and vibrant friend and colleague had been taken from us, caused shock and disbelief to the many people who knew him. Condolences and tributes poured in from around the world.

Ajit Kumar Padhy was born in Orissa, India and on leaving school studied medicine at Berhampur graduating in 1976. He obtained a postgraduate diploma in Radiation Medicine from the University of Bombay in 1987. He obtained membership of the national academy of Medical Sciences after being examined in Nuclear Medicine in 1982. In 1991, he was awarded a Commonwealth Medical Fellowship to study Nuclear Medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London where he worked for 2 years under Keith Britton. In 1992, he returned to India to take up a post in New Delhi where he became Professor and Head of Department. It was whilst working in New Delhi that he was granted leave by the government of India to work at the IAEA in Vienna. Professor Padhy eventually became the Head of the IAEA Nuclear Medicine Division where he served for a period of seven and a half years. It was during this time he excelled in his natural ability for networking

and initiating collaboration. He implemented 22 multinational coordinated research projects, many for the benefit of developing countries such as the use of Re-188-lipiodol and P-32 for radionuclide therapy. He travelled extensively developing close relationships with nuclear medicine professionals throughout the world, establishing close friendships that would last forever. It was these close personal contacts that subsequently enabled him to facilitate educational symposia and congresses in outstanding locations where expert speakers could be attracted for the benefit of those working in developing countries.

In 2005, he took up the post of Senior Consultant in Nuclear Medicine and PET at Singapore General Hospital where he combined his clinical role with educational activities such as the annual Singapore Nuclear Medicine Update meetings and taking on the role of Editor in Chief of the World Journal of Nuclear Medicine.

It was his personal commitment and ability to "make things happen" that resulted in the further promotion and development of nuclear medicine therapy. Firstly, as chairman of the World Radionuclide Therapy Council, and then as its co-founder and president. Subsequently, he took the role as an executive director of the World Association for Radionuclide and Molecular Therapy (WARMTH). WARMTH was inaugurated in 2009 at a ceremony at Cartagena, Colombia. He was instrumental in the rapid growth of WARMTH membership, which now stands at over 390, and he personally signed up most of the members.

During this time he initiated a series of outstanding symposia and congresses in locations such as Goa, Ulaanbaatar, Cartagena, Ho Chi Minh City, and Lapland. He excelled at organizing these meetings by paying meticulous attention to both the educational and social programs for his "nuclear medicine people" from countries throughout the world, paying particular attention to those from the developing countries. His natural charm and easy manner were his personal trademark.

In a recent WARMTH update in July 2013, he was thrilled to announce to the membership that the 1st First WARMTH-SNMMI Continuing Education Program on "Novel Targeted Radionuclide Therapy" was successfully held in Vancouver at the recent 2013 SNMMI Annual Scientific Meeting. He noted that "it was a great beginning to this collaboration between WARMTH

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and SNMMI” and that it is planned that this will be a regular feature of every SNMMI Annual Meeting. He was also very proud to be nominated as the WARMTH representative on the Board of the Nuclear Oncology Council of SNMMI.

The news of his sudden death has resulted in stunned disbelief throughout the world, that such a giant force in our Nuclear Medicine community will no longer walk the grounds of the earth. He was a constant source of inspiration and knowledge to all of us, and worked extremely hard to improve the status of Nuclear Medicine around the world, especially in developing countries. His mentorship to those who have been fortunate to learn under him is also not to be underestimated as the tears of shock and sorrow reverberated around the world. His personal qualities were truly unique and inspiring, and we will never forget his penchant for a good joke and his infectious smile. He was a rare individual – the Guru of Nuclear Medicine.

We are sure that you will agree that his spirit will continue to linger within all of us and he will continue to guide us to establish WARMTH as a credible, functional, and vibrant organization as he had dreamt it to be.

Professor Ajit Padhy is survived by his wife and two sons whom he treasured so much. Our deepest condolences and prayers of peace go out to them.

May he attain everlasting happiness in the life beyond!

**Alan Perkins, Emerita Andres- Barrenechea¹,
Richard Baum²**

Immediate Past Honorary Secretary of WARMTH,
¹Secretary of WARMTH, ²President of WARMTH.

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