

D. J. Jussawalla – An obituary

Darab Jehangir Jussawalla, born on 13 April 1915, started his career as a cancer surgeon at the Tata Memorial Hospital in 1948. He was one of the Founder Cancer Surgeons of the country and made his name as a radical surgeon and mastered the techniques of all extensive major operations. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, Chicago and also a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, Delhi.

Jussawalla had developed several surgical techniques and methodologies: (i) Cautery excision mastectomy to prevent local metastases after surgical excision for breast cancer; (ii) Phased bilateral adrenalectomy for advanced breast cancer which minimized surgical risk from 20% to below 2%; (iii) Synchronous abdomino-perineal excision; (iv) Total oesophagectomy for cancer of the mid-thoracic oesophagus; (v) Continuous intra-arterial infusion of anti-cancer drugs as a primary therapeutic modality in the combined treatment of head and neck cancers.

Jussawalla became Director of the Tata Memorial Centre in 1973 and worked in that capacity for 7 years. During his tenure he undertook expansion of the Centre and introduced regional specialization in Surgical Oncology. He was Professor of Oncology

at the Bombay University and he also trained many surgeons in the field of cancer who have now spread the expertise across the country. He had a large number of publications to his credit in national and international journals.

Jussawalla was a visionary. He was responsible for the establishment of chemotherapy as an important major treatment modality for cancer in India. He opened many avenues of cancer-related activities and post-operative management besides its therapy. He founded (i) the Indian Cancer Society (1951) which he nurtured and helped to expand its activities for more than 45 years which also covered establishing a large number of Cancer Detection Centres; (ii) the first Population-Based Cancer Registry (1963) in India and; (iii) a full-fledged Cancer Rehabilitation Centre (1968). He established the department of Cytology and the department of Chemotherapy at the Tata Memorial Hospital, the first in India in 1956. He also started the *Indian Journal of Cancer* (1963) and the Indian Association of Oncologists (1977). He organized the first and several subsequent National Cancer Conferences in the country.

Jussawalla was associated in various advisory capacities with several cancer organizations and hospitals in India and as also an active member of many na-

tional and international associations connected with cancer. He was actively associated with UICC from 1954 and also with WHO. He worked with these prestigious organizations in various capacities. He established the Lady Ratan Tata Medical and Research Centre in 1984 which was also the headquarters of the Indian Cancer Society, of which he remained Director till the end.

In recognition of his contribution to the field of cancer in India, Jussawalla received several national awards including Padmabhushan.

In spite of his remarkable achievements, Jussawalla remained very humble all along. As a person he was soft spoken, very humane to all but most kind to the under-privileged patients. He provided facilities like free food, shelter and medicines for poor patients.

Jussawalla was a pioneer and a relentless worker in the field of cancer treatment in the Indian context and has left a great legacy behind for others to draw inspiration. He breathed his last on 29 January 1999 after a brief illness.

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