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Indian Contribution to Obstetrics and Gynecology

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Dr. Balachandra D. Patwardhan

The name Patwardhan brings in the mind of any young obstetrician the maneuver used to deliver the deeply engaged head at cesarean section. But, few know about the great man who devised this technique.

Dr. Balachandra D. Patwardhan was born on January 22, 1900 in Akola in the Vidharba district of Maharashtra.

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After his basic schooling there, he joined The Elphinstone College in Mumbai for further studies in interscience as it was known then. He did his MBBS from the premier institute of the Grant Medical College and JJ group of hospitals and his MD in Obstetrics and Gynecology from the KEM Hospital.

The Grant Medical College was fortunate to have him in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology for several years and he retired as Professor and Head of the Department in 1956. He was also attached to many other Hospitals like Nowrosjee Wadia Maternity Hospital, Bombay Hospital, and Prince Aly Khan Hospital. He also had his private clinic at Girgaum where he practiced from 1931 till his retirement.

Dr. Patwardhan lived and practiced Gynecology in the era of stalwarts like B.N. Purandare and Dr. Shirodkar. Dr. Patwardhan, along with Dr. Nargis Motashaw, had an international publication about the ease of delivery of a baby with a deeply engaged head at cesarean section. (Fig. 1). To date, this technique, which is unique, is referred to as “The Patwardhan technique.” There is even a modification suggested to this technique called the “modified Patwardhan technique.” Modern scientific literature supports pull through maneuvers over pushing up the baby’s head. Some people feel that Dr. Patwardhan did not get his due for the work done, but this is not true.

Dr. Patwardhan was closely associated with The Bombay Obstetrics and Gynecology society. He was its Vice President from 1956 to 1958. He went on to become its 13th President in 1958, which was the Silver Jubilee year for the society. Incidentally, his son Dr. Vasant Patwardhan

Fig. 1

went on to become President of the Mumbai society in its Golden Jubilee year (1983–1984).

Dr. Patwardhan had five children in all, three boys and two girls. His two kids Vasant and Medha also took up gynecology and practiced for many years with significant

contributions. Dr. B.D. Patwardhan died at the ripe old age of 83 years on November 12, 1983. His son said to a hall packed with audience, “He remains in our hearts forever. And will continue to do so.” So true!