

BIPIN BHAKTA MEMORIAL LECTURE

Obituary for Professor Bipin Bhakta BSc(Hons) MBChB MD FRCP December 2014 Emeritus Charterhouse Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Leeds



Bipin Bhakta was born in London in 1960 and gained his MBChB from Manchester in 1985 with an intercalated BSc(Hons) in biochemistry. Following house jobs at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, he became a registrar in Rehabilitation and Rheumatology in Wythenshawe Hospital and the Devonshire Royal Hospital. Bipin came to Leeds in 1991 as Senior Registrar in Rehabilitation Medicine following which he was appointed HEFCE Senior Lecturer in Rehabilitation Medicine and Honorary Consultant Physician in Rehabilitation Medicine in 1997. In 2004, Bipin became the second Charterhouse Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine, leading and developing the academic and clinical departments with considerable skill as the pre-eminent academic in Rehabilitation Medicine in the UK, widely appreciated for his research, teaching and clinical abilities. He secured a large grant portfolio from the NIHR, MRC and charitable organisations, specialising in restorative rehabilitation technology. His work was based on collaboration between Rehabilitation Medicine, Mechanical Engineering and Psychology. This work has broadened knowledge in several fields including neurological control, theories of motor learning and the psychology of movement. Bipin pioneered better measurement of human function, underpinning many of the studies of rehabilitation in the UK and beyond. Bipin explored this area productively with Professor Alan Tennant, leading to the development of a suite of widely used outcome measures.

Bipin was also a committed teacher and contributed to each year of the MBChB at Leeds. He chaired the 4th Year Medical and Surgical Specialities committee from 1999 to 2005 during a period of change and intense development. His knowledge of pedagogy and measurement led to the introduction of the most esteem in which the Leeds MBChB is held.

He was instrumental in improving the teaching of Rehabilitation Medicine at postgraduate level, sitting on a number of Royal College committees, including the question-setting panel of the MRCP(UK). He increased the number of Rehabilitation Medicine Academic Clinical Fellowships in Leeds and supervised numerous PhD students in clinical medicine, psychology and engineering, many of whom are now leading their own research groups.

Bipin sat on the 2008 RAE Health Services Research sub-panel and was president of the Society for Research in Rehabilitation from 2006 to 2008. He was on the NICE rehabilitation in critical care guideline development group from 2008 to 2009. More recently, Bipin's expertise was sought for the External Devices and Physical Therapies Panel of the HTA Programme and the Medical Technologies Advisory Committee of NICE. He was also on the UK working party on the use of Botulinum toxin in spasticity, resulting from his long association with paediatricians in joint clinics which helped children with cerebral palsy. For many years Bipin gave his time to the treatment of children in Cyprus with similar problems.

Bipin was Clinical Director for specialised rehabilitation services within Leeds Teaching Hospital NHS Trust from 2004. He led the development of the rehabilitation within the Trust as a regional service, including the new major trauma rehabilitation strategy, which was successfully delivered shortly after he had to retire due to ill health.

In spite a very full diary, Bipin was always generous with his time and energy, whether for colleagues, for the increasing number of academic doctors in his department, those who sought his advice from many countries, students, or patients and their families. His death, after a long illness, was borne with his usual fortitude, good humour and concern for others. He is survived by his wife, Shraddha, son, Shiva Foundation Doctor and daughter, Maya.

The Society agreed to change the name of the newly introduced 'Distinguished Scholar Lecture' to 'The Bipin Bhakta Memorial Lecture' in Bipin's memory in 2015