

THE DR HARIKESH BUCH PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD

By: Anne Demick

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The IOA Professional Service Award is periodically presented to individuals who have unselfishly volunteered their professional services on an International or Regional level and have significantly impacted the quality of life of people who have, or will undergo bowel or urinary diversion surgery. The Award acknowledges work that has been accomplished and, to be effective in the provision of these dedicated services, the recipient has to communicate and co-operate in a friendly way with people of different languages, lifestyles, religions and methods of operation; demanding qualities given to few people. One such person is Dr. Harikesh Buch.

Early in his medical career Dr. Buch recognised the difficulties experienced by the street people who lived in his home city of Mumbai. A skilled colorectal surgeon, he devoted two days a week to operating on those who were unable to pay for his services. Then something happened that changed his outlook on life. As a young man Dr. Buch had a colostomy an operation that would serve as a focus for his volunteer work. As a role model, he could not only physically, but also psychologically, help those who had ostomy surgery by demonstrating to ostomates in India that they could live productive lives.

Dr. Buch's work with The Ostomy Association of India drew the attention of Dato John Cardosa, an IOA leader from Malaysia, who encouraged him to take an active role internationally. Elected to the office of Vice President of IOA's Asian Region, Dr. Buch became exposed to the problems faced by ostomates in many regions of the world.

In his humanitarian work for IOA at national, regional and international levels we see a person who always shows respect, understanding, patience, and affection for his colleagues, regardless of race, religion or political affiliation. His work has been, and continues to be, both regional and global in scope. The time and energy he has spent to improve the situation of ostomates around the world and the results attained through these efforts is extremely admirable.

Dr. Buch's commitments as an organisational leader are as follows:

- Country - President, Ostomates of India
- Regional - Vice President, Asian Region of IOA
- Regional President - Asian Region of IOA
- International President of IOA
- International Vice President of the Asia South Pacific Ostomy Association
- Member of the IOA Co-ordination Committee

Dr. Buch's project accomplishments are as follows:

- Spearheading IOA's involvement in Coloplast's Access to Healthcare Programme organised to give individuals in developing countries access to better intimate health care enabling them to live life with dignity. Initial priority was given to projects from China, India and Mexico.

- Conducting the International Stoma Care Advocacy Programme (ISCAP) training programme for medical health care professionals and ostomates in South American's IOA/ALADO Region.
- Teaching colostomy patients how to irrigate.
- Teaching the principles of the IOA Visiting Programme to members of the medical profession and ostomates.
- Awareness and Problem Solving Visits to South East Asian Countries of Malaysia, Singapore, The Phillipines, Taiwan and Thailand.
- **Lions For Stoma Care (LFSC)** is a Lions Clubs service initiated by Prof. Carlo Pezcoller of Modena, Italy. Periodically, selected doctors from different developing countries of Asia, Eastern Europe or Spanish speaking countries of South & Central America are invited to Modena, Italy, for stoma care training. When they return to their respective countries, similar training programs in stoma care are organised by the local Lions and LFSC. Prof. Carlo Pezcoller and Dr. Buch, members of the LFSC International Travelling Teaching Team, join with the local doctors that have been trained to train their medical associates. Such training has been undertaken in many countries of Asia, Eastern Europe, South America, the Middle East and Africa. Training also includes the IOA Visiting Programme and the importance of utilising the rehabilitated ostomy patient visitor in the patient's rehabilitation process.

Dr. Buch's dedicated work to and for ostomates dates well before the turn of the century and, fortunately for ostomates of the world, continues yet today.

It was with this in mind that the IOA co-ordination committee adopted a motion made by Ken Aukett, OAA's second elected member of the IOA-CC, on behalf of the OAA, to rename the IOA Professional Service Award as the **Dr. Harikesh Buch Professional Service Award**. The IOA-CC adopted the motion unanimously.

The first recipient of the Dr. Harikesh Buch Professional Service Award was given to Dr. Katsushinda Shindo of Japan during the ASPOA Congress in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam held last October 31, 2014. It is in this thrust that we look forward to more Professional Service Awardees who can uphold the advocacy for a quality of life of ostomates worldwide.