

Dr. Mandakini Parihar: A woman we cannot forget



Dr. Mandakini Parihar, Mandy for many of us, was born on 2 August, 1962 in Mumbai and sadly left us on 10 September, 2012 at a very young age of 50 years.

We all knew Mandakini as a beautiful, fair with long hair, lively, articulate lady who had befriended us and amazed us with her scientific knowledge, expertise, efficiency, and responsibility! She was a gift of nature to all Professional Organizations, as she was so well-versed with the Constitution and its laws. We all loved her for her assistance in entangling all the tangles, and bringing a beautiful product before us, may it be a workshop, a Continued Medical Educational program (CME), a conference, a consensus meeting, or a simple solution! The combination of her beauty and brains had won her the title of “Miss MBBS” at the L.T.M.G. Medical College! However, soft Mandakini seemed from outside she was tough from inside. She did not hesitate to speak her mind and would not tolerate any injustice without voicing her opinion, irrespective of the consequences.

I have had the good fortune of working with Mandakini on many programs especially during my Presidency at the Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI), my Presidency at the Indian Menopause Society, and my Chairmanship at the Indian College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She was a solid rock behind me, and a large portion of accolades, which all these activities received, was due to her! I truly miss her as a wonderful friend, a great organizer and a soulmate whom I could talk to about anything!

It was sad to see Mandakini lose all those long tresses to chemotherapy and add many kilos with the huge amount of steroids that she received. Yet Mandakini did not lose her spirit – she met everyone, she joked about her triplets (the three medical pumps attached to her chest) and addressed the Navi Mumbai Obstetrics and Gynecology Society members with

a beautiful oration on 10 lessons she learnt from her illness!

I was in constant touch with her during her treatment of almost 7 months in London, where she went for her bone marrow transplant. She had her highs and lows and the last time I spoke to her was about a week before her demise, when she told me for the first and the last time “Duru, I am tired, I am coming home, I miss all of you”.

The family stood strongly besides her during her stay in London, encouraging her, supporting her, and keeping her company during those dreadful months of isolation and treatment. I salute them for their strength and love and compassion. During Mandakini’s last days, they realized that there was not much available as support to people suffering from cancer. Keeping that thought in mind, they have dedicated a website www.copewithcancer.org in her memory through the MADAT Trust, which they have initiated for this very much-needed activity.

Mandakini, will live with us in spirit through this website, and will offer comfort and relief to those who need it the most. God bless her soul.

Duru Shah

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