

## Interview with Dr KH Sancheti conducted by Dr Ashok Shyam



Dr KH Sancheti

### Lets talk about your family and your childhood

I come from a lower middle class family. I was third among a family of 7 siblings and my father owned a small grocery shop in Pune. My primary education happened in Pune and did my intermediate at Fergusson College Pune. I did my MBBS from BJ Medical college, Pune and my MS Ortho from KEM Hospital Mumbai.

### Why did you decide to become a doctor?

When I was in 10th Std, I was staying in Narayan Peth Pune, I had typhoid fever. Dr Soman used to come and treat me for fever and the way he handled my pain and fever inspired me to become a doctor. Another reason was that when I was in 11th Std, I had a friend at Narayan Peth named Vijay Karnik. I used to go to his house and his father was a general practitioner. His father used to tell us that the medical profession is excellent and only profession where you can relieve many people of their pain. When I was doing my MBBS in BJ Medical college and

during my orthopaedic term I treated one patient with old temporomandibular dislocation. That made me interested in orthopaedics. Also, I was very good at carpentry in my school and college and that may have also influenced my decision. I was always fond of surgical line and if not an orthopaedic surgeon, I would have taken a surgical branch.

### If you had not become an orthopaedic surgeon what would you have become

Yes, if not in medicine, I would have gone in architecture. In my times' architecture and marine engineering were coming up. I was excellent in drawing and so architecture was a natural choice. As a Surgeon also I still continue to design hospital and have contributed to designs of more than 200 hospitals.

### What is the secret of your Success

I think I should put in points  
**a. Humility:** first quality I feel that is necessary is humility. This quality helps me to approach anyone and learn from them. This also means that anyone can approach you. This is very important for us who deal with people every day in order to grow.

**b. Honesty:** I remember one incident with my father at the grocery shop. Unintentionally and in a hurry I weighed a little less grains and my father saw it and slapped me on my hands. He said let the balance come in centre and give it carefully. Never cheat the patient, he said, because of the customer, I am able to give you food and education. That slap on the hand till today has not

allowed me to do any dishonest work.

**c. Gratitude:** If you have appreciation, it is one of the best qualities needed to sustain success. I have always remembered everyone who has helped in my life and helped them whenever required. This also gives you a very different character in front of people. The humbles and gratitude connect with patients very well

**d. Share the knowledge:** I was always very fond of teaching. I used to teach undergraduates at BJ Medical college and there used to be 200 students in my class. I still meet many of my students and they remember me fondly. This makes you very popular among students and peers

**e. Forgiveness:** Do not keep any grudge against anyone in your mind. This forgiveness makes your personality very clean and makes your face express serenity. If anybody has hurt you, forgive him immediately.

**f. Hard Work:** I remember my mother used to work from 3 am in the morning till 9 pm in the evening. I have imbibed this quality and have worked 18 hours a day very often

**g. Keep Updated:** Always keep updated in your field. This I have learnt from Dr AK Talwalkar, who was always ready to learn new things in orthopaedics. This helped me a lot

**h. Build a good team:** This is very essential if you have to sustain anything of quality for a long time. Surround yourself with competent people and make a cohesive team. It is currently the team at Sancheti Institute under leadership of my son Dr Parag, that is keeping the banner of Sancheti Hospital flying high. And I believe it will

continue to fly high because of this teamwork.

I think honesty from my father, hard work part from my mother and support from my wife, peers colleagues and everyone around me has added a lot to my success

Another point is that people many times call me great visionary and tell me I have great vision. However, it is not like that. I can give the example of Senapati Bapat who at the age of 80 years went to meet Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1920 to participate in Satyagraha. Tilak told him that 'Tatya, your eyesight is poor, and you cannot see beyond 20 feet, how can you work for Satyagraha?'. Senapati Bapat replied that 'It's true I cannot see beyond 20 feet, but when I travel 20 feet, I can see further 20 feet'. This positive approach made a great impact on me. I did not have a big vision to begin with, but as I achieved one goal, I could see further 20 feet and try and achieve the next goal. Same happened when I started a small hospital and went on to build bigger hospital. I realised that resident doctors are needed, and I worked to make Sancheti institute the first private hospital to have residents. Then there was a need for physiotherapists and we started the physiotherapy college. There was a need for hospital administrators and we started the hospital management college. So, each time I reached a point and could see the further 20 feet, I decided to go beyond and conquer the next 20 feet. So, all my life I have kept on conquering these small 20 feet's to travel a large distance and even today I make it a point to see the next 20 feet and strive to achieve it.

### **What is your opinion about the SuperSpeciality culture in**

### **Orthopaedics?**

You must flow with the stream. There is a super specialised culture in all fields including orthopaedics. The technology advancement have also helped in making this distinction. However, we can never forget that we should always be an excellent general orthopaedic surgeon. That is the reason I suggest after post-graduation we must work in a trauma unit in a government hospital. Trauma helps us to be in close touch with our patients and learn the basics of Orthopaedic care. It makes us ready to face any eventuality in casualty. The speciality culture has to be accepted but with a strong base in general orthopaedics

### **What is your view on the future of Orthopaedics in India?**

I think orthopaedics has a great future in India. The growth in roads and infrastructure, the fast life of the current population and many other socio-occupational changes have made orthopaedic an indispensable faculty which will continue to grow in future. Orthopaedics is also a simple branch with simple requirements and surgeons can start working at any place even a small taluka place.

There are a few ethical issues that we will face in future. Due to the consumer protection act and other issues, we have to be very alert in future. The changing paradigm of doctor-patient relationship will definitely impact the clinical practice, but if we follow a good ethical and moral code, we will have nothing to worry

### **Message for the next generation of Orthopaedic surgeons?**

My message is as follows

a. Orthopaedic surgeons have a great future. Even though commerce is always

essential but we can always practice orthopaedics ethically.

b. Have a good rapport with friends, general physicians and well wisher who send you patients specially in early days. Keep them updated about their patients condition. This can help you get patients to sharpen your skills and also to make everyone aware of your abilities. However, do not take commissions from anyone.

c. Keep yourself informed about current practices, through conferences, reading journals and books. Since whatever is being done today, 50% of it will be obsolete after 10 years. so keeping abreast is very important to be successful

d. In metros, try to do group practices or institutional practice. In small taluka places a small hospital or working will small group is more advisable

Sometimes people have bad opinion about doctors, but when the same people need a doctor, they realise the value of the doctor. But if you do your work ethically and with honesty, nobody can criticise you and that is the best feeling in life. Earning money to have a good house, have your children go to good school and few other things for a comfortable life, but beyond that earning excess money is of no use to us. Also socialising in the community is very essential, especially with influential people or politicians. You can do good work through them for the society and it will also help you in growth. You can also work with bodies like Rotary etc to give back the society. Don't lose any opportunity to be in touch with society and give back to society.

I extend my best wishes to all of you and thank Bombay Orthopaedic Society for the opportunity for this interview

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### **How to Cite this Article**

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