

# The Midtowner

Bulletin of Rotary Club of Chandigarh Midtown: R.I. District 3080

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## PROGRAMME

**Stem Cells – The Future of Medicine**  
*Guest Speaker: Neeraj Parashar and his team*

Friday, March 15, 2013

Time: 6.30 p.m.

Venue: Hotel President, Sector 26, Chandigarh

## **Nobel Prize in Medicine 2012 : What it means to all of us?**

In our club meeting on March 08, 2013 Prof. (Dr.) I.S. Dua, a fellow Rotarian from our club, Former Chairman, Department of Botany, Panjab University, Chandigarh, described in an erudite fashion and with the help his award winning slides that how life is a journey towards increasing specialization and how all of us developed from fertilized egg cell. During the first days after conception, this fertilized cell transforms into a bundle of cells (embryo) each of which is capable of developing into all the cell types that form the adult organism. Such cells are called pluripotent stem cells. With its further development, these cells give rise to nerve cells, muscle cells, liver cells and all other cell types - each of them specialised to carry out a specific task in the adult body. This journey from immature to specialised cell was previously considered to be unidirectional. It was thought that the cell changes in such a way during maturation that it would no longer be possible for it to return to an immature, pluripotent stage. Prof. Dua further took us to the realms of Nobel Prizes and briefly outlined its history of 112 years. He revealed that it was on 27 November 1895, Alfred Nobel signed his last will and testament, giving the largest share of his fortune to a series of prizes in Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Literature and Peace - the Nobel Prizes.



*Prof. Dr. I.S. Dua*

Every year since 1901 the Nobel Prize has been awarded for achievements in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and for peace. The Nobel Prize is an international award administered by the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1968, economic sciences were added to the list of fields. The individuals and organisations awarded the Nobel Prize are designated as Nobel Laureates as Laureate as the word refers

to being signified by the laurel wreath. In Greek mythology, the god Apollo is represented wearing a laurel wreath on his head. A laurel wreath is a circular crown made of branches and leaves of the bay laurel (In Latin: *Laurus nobilis*). In Ancient Greece, laurel wreaths were awarded to victors as a sign of honour - both in athletic competitions and in poetic meets. Prof. Dua unfolded the story of 2012 Nobel Prize in medicine by narrating that in the course of laboratory investigations Dr John B. Gurdon, a British from the University of Oxford U.K., challenged the dogma that the specialised cell is irreversibly committed to its fate.

The nucleus of the mature cell had not lost its capacity to drive development to a fully functional organism. He hypothesised that

its genome might still contain all the information needed to drive its development into all the different cell types of an organism. In 1962, he tested this hypothesis by replacing the cell nucleus of a frog's egg cell with a nucleus from a mature, specialised cell derived from the intestine of a tadpole. The egg developed into a fully functional, cloned tadpole and subsequent repeats of the experiment yielded adult frogs. Gurdon's landmark discovery was initially met with scepticism but became accepted when it had been confirmed by other scientists. It initiated intense research and the technique was further developed, leading eventually to the cloning of mammals. Gurdon's research taught us that the nucleus of a mature, specialised cell can be returned to an immature, pluripotent state. This ultimately led to the creation of Dolly - the cloned sheep by the Scottish embryologist Ian Wilmut. Would it ever be possible to turn an intact cell back into a pluripotent stem cell was the burning question which was left unanswered? Shinya Yamanaka was able to answer this question as a scientific breakthrough more than 40 years after Gurdon's discovery. His research concerned embryonic stem cells, i.e. pluripotent stem cells that are isolated from the embryo and cultured in the laboratory. Such stem cells were initially isolated from mice by Martin Evans (Nobel Prize 2007) and Yamanaka tried to find the genes that kept them immature. When several of these genes had been identified, he tested whether any of them could reprogram mature cells to become pluripotent stem cells. Yamanaka introduced these genes, in different combinations, into mature cells from connective tissue, and examined the results under the microscope. They finally found a combination that worked, and the recipe was surprisingly simple. By introducing four genes together, they could reprogram their fully developed cells into immature stem cells. The resulting induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells) could develop into mature cell types such as fibroblasts, nerve cells and gut cells. The discovery that intact, mature cells could be reprogrammed into pluripotent stem cells was published in 2006 and was immediately considered a major breakthrough.

The discoveries of Gurdon and Yamanaka have shown that specialised cells can turn back the developmental clock under certain circumstances. Although their genome undergoes modifications during development, these modifications are not irreversible. We have obtained a new view of the development of cells and organisms. Research during recent years has shown that iPS cells can give rise to all the different cell types of the body. These discoveries have also provided new tools for scientists around the world and led to remarkable progress in many areas of



*PHF recognition by PDG Shaju Peter for Priya, daughter in law of PP Indrajeet Sengupta and R'ann Malabika Sengupta*



*PP Dr. Vanita Gupta presents the flags of Rotary Clubs of JFK Airport, New York and St. Croix Mid-Isle, US Virgin Islands to President Ritu Singal*

biotechnology. It was for these significant discoveries that The Nobel Prize in Medicine 2012 was awarded jointly to John B.

Gurdon and Shinya Yamanaka for the discovery that mature cells can be reprogrammed to become pluripotent and what it means to



*Rtn. Prof. Dr. I.S. Dua presents wedding anniversary gift to R'ann Neena & Rtn. Tejbans S. Jauhar*



*Prof. Dr. I.S. Dua presents birthday gift to Rtn. Wing Comdr. Kamal Nath*



*President Ritu Singal displays the kit partially contributed by Rotary Chandigarh Midtown for the District Conference*



*PE Kavita Vij D/o Rtn. Dr. Jawahar Luthra of Rotary Club of Delhi South Metropolitan, visited our club on 8.3.13*



*Rtn. Arjan Singh presents a memento to Prof. Dr. I.S. Dua and gets punctuality award from him. Looking on are President Ritu Singal and Secretary A.K. Puri*

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all was clarified by Prof. Dua that we now understand that the mature cell does not have to be confined forever to its specialised state. Textbooks have been rewritten and new research fields have been established. By reprogramming human cells, scientists have created new opportunities to study diseases and develop methods for diagnosis and therapy. It is on the line with regard to the work undertaken in the field of plant genetic engineering (GE) which has transformed the physiological and immunological profiles of plants and has allowed a breeder to pick up traits and splice it in rather than searching them from the rubbles of mutated seedlings. How the precision of GE has offered a tool to a scientist to control in which tissue, under what circumstances, and how much of a gene is to be expressed. The result turned out to be a truly extraordinary variety of alternatives to the chemical control of insects, dosage oriented use of herbicides without any damage to target crop.

Hitherto, approximately 40 percent of crop yield in the world was lost to weeds and pest every year. The spectacular success of GE crops with a lead from cotton in lowering those losses is why Science magazine could report in 2007, "Over the past 11 years biotech crop has increased more than 60-fold, making GM crops one of the most quickly adopted farming technologies in modern history." Just two GE traits are responsible for most of the success-herbicide tolerance and insect resistance.

A highly educative presentation by Rtn. Prof. Dr. I.S. Dua was very well appreciated by all. Vote of thanks was proposed by Rtn. Arjan Singh for the impressive capsule highlighting the salient features and potential of genetic engineering in a developing economy like India especially in the light of some aspersions being casted towards its promises and quiescent dynamism.



*New Rtn. Dr. Mrs. Harinderjit Kaur introduced by Rtn. Dr. Shashi Jain being inducted by PDG Shaju Peter. Looking on is President Ritu Singal*



*Introduced by Secretary A.K. Puri, inducted by PDG Shaju Peter, new Rtn. Manoj Chadha, his wife Manu Chadha, daughters Priya and Pratibha*



*Parivar-e-Ratan Recognition to Inayat by Liz Audenart in District Conference. Looking on is proud mother President Ritu Singal and DG Manmohan Singh*



*Public Image Project. This will be displayed by our Rotarians in hospitals and clinics in Chandigarh tricity*



*Bag is back! One of the 100 percentors in attendance in March 2013 will get this gift from President Ritu Singal*

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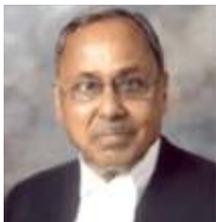
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## From Legal Education to Judicial Education



Dr. Balram Gupta

Dr. Balram K. Gupta, Senior Advocate and former Professor and Chairman, Department of Laws, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Honorary Dean, Faculty of Law, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and Past President, Rotary Club Chandigarh Midtown has been appointed as the Director, National Judicial Academy, Bhopal by the Chief Justice of India. Dr. Gupta has devoted 45 years to teaching and practicing of law. In fact, he is a good and rare mix of academic and professional lawyer. Dr. Gupta says, "It has been a very satisfying innings. I am looking forward to the new challenging responsibility with humility."

Our hearty congratulations to PP Dr. Balram Gupta & R'ann Shashi Gupta and we wish them good luck and happiness in the new assignment.

## President Ritu Singal's Thought on Peace – Step 32: Positive self talk will bring peace

Have we seen a potter carrying luggage? Similarly, a weight lifter carries heavy weights. What is the self talk happening within them? The potter is thinking that he is unfortunate, and is like a donkey. While the weight lifter is thinking that his muscles are becoming stronger, he will become a great weight lifter and that more sweat will give him more stamina. So the self talk will

change the effect on their health, mind and ultimately, peace.

Even Edison discovered electricity after 10000 experiments. When asked that he failed 9999 times, he said these 9999 attempts were successful in teaching him that there are 9999 ways which cannot produce electricity!

## Inspiring Thoughts to support our Hearing Aids project

Inspiring Thoughts, a tremendous effort of compiling done by PP B.L. Ramsisaria (it is regretted for 'Sharma', an error in the last bulletin!), has been very well accepted and appreciated in so many ways. The book is dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Sulochana Ramsisaria who constantly motivated BLR for social activities.

compilation was released in District Conference of RID 3080 and the book was part of the conference kit and it is my firm belief that of all the contents of the kit, this one will outlive the rest."

In the 'Forward' of the book, PRIP Rajendra K. Saboo states, "I have known Shri B.L. Ramsisaria for last five decades or so. An engineer by profession he has an eye for perfection. He has been a Rotarian who has understood the essence of Rotary through knowledge and practice in both words and spirit. He is a person who would take up a challenge and convert it into accomplishment. This is what he has done in this book."

President Ritu Singal says, "I am grateful to PP B.L. Ramsisaria for agreeing to adapt his labour of love of several years to raise resources for the community service projects of Chandigarh Midtown, and this book is a fund raiser to support our hearing aids project." PDG Shaju Peter remarks, "I am delighted that this

## First Cheshire Homes Awards 2013 for Differently Abled on 17.3.13

Cheshire Homes, Chandigarh will be giving five awards for individuals and organizations working for physically challenged in the tricity area, on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at 11.30 am at Bal Bhavan, Sector 23, Chandigarh. In addition to this, aids/appliances and rehabilitation kits are being given, which has been sponsored by our club. All Rotarians are invited to

attend this function to support the cause of disabled persons, and make them feel differently abled!

Union Railway Minister Mr. Pawan Kumar Bansal will be the Chief Guest. 'The Tribune' and 'Day and Night' News Channel are the media sponsors.

## Acknowledgment with thanks

### Donations for Club Projects:

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