

## OBITUARY

## In memory of Chandy Verghese

Chandy Verghese was born in Trissur, India, studied in Delhi, entered Madras Medical College in 1968 and following his grandfather's footsteps as a doctor, he moved to the UK in 1976.

Chandy became Lecturer in Anesthesia at the Royal London Hospital. Here, in 1981, he met another recently appointed Lecturer, Archie Brain, who had joined the Professorial Anesthetics Unit and was applying to the Ethics Committee for permission to study the clinical use of a new airway device he had invented. Chandy, like other colleagues, was initially skeptical, but rapidly became fascinated; fascination quickly became passionate commitment, which eventually formed the basis for a remarkable partnership, marking the beginning of a long-lasting friendship which was to deeply influence the story of modern Anesthesia.

In 1987, Chandy accepted a Consultant post at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. During the intervening years, Archie had continued ceaselessly developing his invention, and after failing to arouse commercial interest in the UK, in 1983 he finally managed to persuade Mr Gaines-Cooper (international entrepreneur with no medical knowledge but a sure instinct for a winning idea), to provide the financial backing for a commercial venture. Chandy, instinctively understanding the new device's possibilities, re-enters the story when, serendipitously, the three men were brought together in 1990.

Gaines-Cooper happened to own a property in Reading, and Archie, overwhelmed with clinical commitment and developing and lecturing on his invention, was offered from Chandy an honorary Consultant Post at the Royal Berkshire, thus creating the unique opportunity for Archie to devote himself to the essential and labor-intensive task of creating prototypes, which Chandy would then use his superb clinical judgement to assess. His skill and care for his patients never failed him, winning him the respect and love of many, while the inventor was never in doubt that his prototypes were in a safe pair of hands. It was the beginning of a collaboration which proved immensely fertile, so that ten years later, the now international company was distributing LMA in over 180 countries.

Yet, had it not been for Chandy Verghese, the spectacular LMA™ family development might never have happened. Many brilliant researchers contributed to the rapid expansion of understanding of the new technology, but putative parents of the gastric access and second seal concept were Archie Brain and Chandy Verghese.

The name of Chandy remains in the homonym "Chandy's Manouver" to facilitate intubation using the LMA-Fastrach™, in registries of many scientific societies (including AAGBI, AOA, SAM – for which he served as the 9<sup>th</sup> President - and the SIAARTI International Airway Advisory board).

Chandy, who co-authored many peer-reviewed papers, was a very attractive international lecturer, deservedly being awarded with the 2011 DAS medal. His Youtube video demonstrating Fastrach awake self-insertion rapidly went viral in an era when social networking had yet to become popular. In 2007 he also played an essential role in supporting the first “International LMA Training Course” in the Advanced Simulation Unit in Padua University.

We first had the chance to meet Chandy in the late ‘90s, on a rainy day in Reading. The impression we still retain was that of a gentle giant, with an almost paradoxical combination of imposing body structure and graceful movement when manipulating a patients’ airway, al-

ways keen to impart his secrets with a reassuring, warm smile.

In Archie’s words, *he was a truly wonderful friend, a superb clinician and a great teacher.*

And all of this, we will miss, Chandy.

We are sure your teaching and contribution will follow us for many years to come from the highest Airways.

Rest in peace.

MASSIMILIANO SORBELLO

MASSIMO MICAGLIO

ARCHIE IJ BRAIN

On behalf of SIAARTI – Società Italiana di Anestesia  
Analgesia Rianimazione e Terapia Intensiva,  
Gruppo di Studio SIAARTI Gestione Vie Aeree,  
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