M.G. Karmarkar
(28 April 1934–12 January 2014)

Professor Madhukar G. Karmarkar left for his heavenly abode on the night of 12 January 2014, in New Delhi. He would have turned 80 in April 2014. Born in Pune (then Poona), Maharashtra, Professor Karmarkar completed his PhD in Biochemistry from M.S. University, Baroda, India. He joined the Department of Pathology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi as a Research Officer in 1961. In 1965–67, he was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship by the Harvard Medical School, USA, where he worked with Professor John B. Stanbury, one of the pioneers in the field of endemic goitre. He joined the Department of Medicine, AIIMS as a faculty member in January 1972 and continued to serve it till 1983. He then moved to the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism, which had been set up at AIIMS. Later, he established the Department of Laboratory Medicine in AIIMS, and was its first Professor and Head. He continued to work in this department till his superannuation in May 1994.

Dr Karmarkar was a teacher par excellence and played a major role in teaching and training generations of students at AIIMS. His attitude to teaching was characterized by patience and thoroughness, qualities that are rarely seen these days. He was an inspiring teacher, astute researcher and erudite scholar, in addition to being a motivator who was ever-optimistic. He had a great sense of humour and was a wonderful human being. It was a tribute to his qualities as a teacher that nearly all his students were in touch with him till the last days of his life and sought guidance and advice from him.

Professor Karmarkar was a founder member of the International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (ICCIDD) and Diabetes Foundation of India. He continued to be associated with these organizations in various capacities. At one time, he held the post of Senior Advisor in the ICCIDD and was the President of the Diabetes Foundation of India.

Professor Karmarkar was a doyen in the field of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD). Starting with his association with the Kangra Valley study in India in the 1960s, he played a stellar role in delineating the epidemiology of IDD in the country. He was also part of the team that unravelled the epidemiology of neonatal hypothyroidism and made some important findings on the impact of IDD on neurocognitive development in India. He played a major role in developing methods for the assessment of iodine nutrition. Dr Karmarkar also played a central role in the development of the simple micro-plate method for the estimation of iodine excretion in urine.

Professor Karmarkar contributed to the establishment of the IDD control programme at the global level and in several countries in the Southeast Asia region. He worked as advisor to various bilateral and multilateral non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on problems related to endemic goitre in Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, Iran, Libya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand. He also helped in establishing IDD monitoring laboratories in many countries, including DPR Korea, Libya, Iran, Nepal and Syria. Dr Karmarkar was deeply involved in the activities of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), particularly its nutrition division. He was a member of many of the task forces and working groups of the ICMR and other governmental organizations on hypertension, anaemia, IDD and other micronutrient deficiencies. He also worked closely with salt producers and other stakeholders for the promotion of Universal Salt Iodization (USI) in India and other countries of the region. He was actively involved in developing capacity for the monitoring of IDD.

Besides his academic and scientific pursuits, Professor...
Karmarkar’s three greatest passions were Indian classical music, cricket and mangoes. He was comfortable in the company both of giants and people lower than him in rank, and this sense of equality rubbed off on all those with whom he came in contact. Dr Karmarkar will always be remembered for his jovial nature and for having a repertoire of jokes for every occasion. Last, but not the least, he will be remembered for his fistfuls of ‘saunf’ (fennel seeds), which he extracted from his pockets and doled out to all his friends whenever and wherever he met.

Till his death, he was an ardent supporter of the cause of the elimination of iodine in the country and region, and was actively involved in the promotion of USI. With his demise, the medical fraternity and iodine community have lost one of their inspirations and well-wishers.

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**Announcement for Workshops 2015**

As part of an Indo-US Collaboration, the National Institutes of Health, USA has sponsored a series of workshops since 2006 on various aspects of clinical research (with an emphasis on clinical trials), including biostatistics, study design and randomization issues, data management, research ethics, and regulatory aspects.

As a continuation of this series, three workshops are planned at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow during 2015 as follows: (i) Workshop on ‘Scientific Paper Writing’ on 27 February to 1 March 2015, (ii) Workshop on ‘Basic Biostatistics’ on 2–4 May 2015, and (iii) Workshop on ‘Advanced Biostatistics’ in September–October 2015 (exact dates to be announced later).

The workshops are aimed at active biomedical researchers who hold faculty positions. Investigators involved in clinical research, who are in a position to lead clinical research studies, should find this workshop useful. Only around 30 applicants will be accepted for each workshop.

Applicants should download an application format (asks for summary of their experience and expertise in clinical research in a structured format) from [https://sites.google.com/site/sgpgiinhtcoursess/](https://sites.google.com/site/sgpgiinhtcoursess/) and email it as an attachment to sgpgi.courses@gmail.com. The last date for applications for the three courses are 5 January, 15 March and 31 July 2015, respectively. A selection committee will notify the successful applicants of acceptance about 4 weeks before each course.

There is no registration fee, and twin-shared guest house accommodation and boarding will be provided without any charge. However, participants need to fund their travel through their personal funds, their institutions or other sources. We may be able to fund travel for a few qualified applicants whose institution cannot cover their expenses; however, in view of limited funds, this will be possible only in exceptional cases.

For details, contact: Rakesh Aggarwal, Department of Gastroenterology, SGPGI, Lucknow 226014 or sgpgi.courses@gmail.com