

Prof. N. N. Wig & His Contribution to Understand Dhat Syndrome

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Professor N. N. Wig (1930-2018) is a pioneer of Indian psychiatry. He is a well-known figure in the field of psychiatry across the globe, over past five decades for his significant academic contributions. For his significant contributions and giving Indian psychiatry a new height, he is popularly known as the “Father of Indian Psychiatry”. He carefully nurtured Indian psychiatry as a result of which Indian psychiatry become a powerful force in the international forum.

Professor Wig graduated (MBBS) from the prestigious King George's Medical College (now King George's Medical University), Lucknow in 1953 and also obtained his postgraduate degree (MD) in medicine from the same institution in 1957. Thereafter, he got four months training on Psychiatry at All India Institute of Mental Health, Bangalore (now NIMHANS, Bengaluru) [1, 2]. After receiving training in psychiatry, he returned back to King George's Medical College, Lucknow as a lecturer of neuropsychiatry and started the psychiatry unit, which was the first general hospital psychiatric unit in India [1]. Later, he went abroad for fellowship training for two years, where he also completed diploma in psychological medicine from two institutes of England and Scotland. After returning India in 1963, he joined the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh and started the psychiatry unit there [1, 3]. He led the department of psychiatry of PGIMER till 1980 and there after led the psychiatry unit of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, before he become the regional advisor of mental health of World Health Organization (WHO) [1, 4].

Professor Wig, played a pivotal role in giving a structure to Indian mental health concepts. He contributed to the development of community mental health care delivery in India. He contributed to development of psychiatry in India through understanding the nosology of psychiatric disorders, psychiatric aspect of various physical disorders, initiating multidisciplinary collaborative research with other medical disciplines, culture-bound syndromes, evaluating the course and outcome of psychosis as well as psychotherapeutic interventions in Indian settings [1].

Prof. Wig, had coined the term 'Dhat syndrome', which refers to anxiety, somatic manifestations related semen loss [5–8]. Prof. Wig described 'Dhat syndrome' among young males, who presented with anxiety, depression and multiple non-specific somatic symptoms, attributing these symptoms to semen loss per urethra during defecation or micturition [6, 8]. In a study, Malhotra & Wig, described that people with 'Dhat syndrome' perceive their loss of semen to be excessive during nocturnal emission and they also harbour the belief that semen loss has detrimental effect on health as semen is the source of strength and stamina [6]. The misconceptions centred around semen loss is the major contributing factor to development of 'Dhat syndrome'. Resolving the sexual myths and misconceptions during treatment helps in resolution of the

symptoms of 'Dhat syndrome', as reported by Malhotra & Wig in their study in 1975 [6]. Prof. Vijay K. Varma had proposed to include 'Dhat syndrome' under neurotic disorders in the classificatory system and finally 'Dhat syndrome' was included under ICD-10 category F48 [8]. Over past few decades, many researches were carried out in patients with 'Dhat syndrome'. The pioneering foundation work of Prof. Wig, helped in conceptualizing 'Dhat syndrome'.

Prof. N. N. Wig passed away at the age of 88 years, after prolonged medical illness on 12th July 2018. His demise is a great loss to world psychiatry. His contributions and teachings will be remembered for ever.

References

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