

## Raj Kumar Gupta

Dr Raj Gupta—Senior Consultant Cytopathologist and retired Head of Cytology Unit, Wellington Hospital and School of Medicine—served a distinguished career in the medical profession which in June 2009 saw him complete 50 years of practice in the field of pathology.



28 years of those 50 years were served in Wellington, New Zealand (1981–2009) where he was consulted in over 50,000 cases. Dr Gupta was a leading and recognised international authority in the specialist area of cytopathology where he made a significant contribution towards the increased understanding of this complex medical area.

Dr Gupta was born in India in 1932 and earned his MD at Agra University in 1957. He emigrated to North America in 1962 where he trained in pathology at the Massachusetts General Hospital Harvard Medical School-affiliated training program at Worcester Memorial Hospital and served as Senior Resident in Anatomic Pathology (1964). He completed his postgraduate study in cytopathology at the Postgraduate Institute of Cytology at Johns Hopkins University (1972).

Dr Gupta was a Fellow of the College of American Pathologists (1971), Fellow of the International Academy of Cytology (1977), Diplomate of the International Board of Cytopathology (1980), Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (Canada 1979), and Affiliate of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australia.

Dr Gupta served as Associate Professor of Pathology from 1965–1979 at the State University of New York School of Medicine and its affiliate University Hospitals in Buffalo, New York and Consultant Pathologist to the Niagara Regional and St Catherines General Hospitals and affiliate laboratories 1967–79 (Canada). From 1979–1981 he served as Professor of Pathology with the National University of Singapore Faculty of Medicine and its affiliate University Hospitals.

Dr Gupta moved to Wellington in 1981 to take up the position with Wellington Hospital and School of Medicine to develop the Cytology Unit—where he served as Senior Consultant Cytopathologist and Head of Cytology Unit until his retirement at the end of 2003. He continued to serve as Senior Consultant Cytopathologist at Aotea Pathology in Wellington until his retirement in June 2009.

Dr Gupta was specialised in fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) where he was particularly noted for his work. He introduced the FNA procedure to New Zealand in 1983 and spearheaded its use—with the result that the procedure is now widely used in the New Zealand clinical domain.

Fine needle aspiration (FNA) is a diagnostic procedure by means of which cellular material is aspirated by a syringe and a fine needle under negative pressure. The smear of the aspirate is then studied cytologically. Through this process, tumour grades can be established preoperatively, thus reducing the need for invasive operational procedures and enabling the early detection and diagnosis of medical conditions / cancers.

Dr Gupta had an extensive publication record as an author of over 250 medical articles in peer-reviewed journals. He published in the top high-ranked international journals in the field of cytopathology where he has illuminated major aspects of FNAC inspired from clinical problems and rare findings. His publications regularly receive citations. Titled examples of some of his later papers published include:

- Fine needle aspiration cytodiagnosis of nipple adenoma (papillomatosis)
- Fine needle aspiration cytology of pilomatrixoma of the arm and the role of cell block examination in the diagnosis
- Needle aspiration cytology of seromas of the breast from irradiated lumpectomy sites
- Diagnostic value of needle aspiration cytology in assessment of axillary lymph nodes
- Diagnosis of entamoeba *Histolytica* in a cervical smear
- Fine catheter aspiration cytology of peritoneal cavity improves decision in difficult abdomen

Dr Gupta was a distinguished member of the editorial boards for the prestigious international journals *Acta Cytologica* (2008), *Diagnostic Cytopathology* (1995) and *The Breast Journal* (1995). He was a member of the The International Committee of the Papanicolaou Society of Cytology (1994) and acted as an invited reviewer for the *Journal of Experimental Biology and Medicine*, *American Review of Respiratory Diseases*, *Cytopathology*, and *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*.

As a strong proponent of continuing medical education, Dr Gupta regularly secured and organised visiting lectures for some leading American cytopathology experts to visit Wellington and share their knowledge with the New Zealand medical community. These experts included Dr Jan Silverman (Director Cytopathology, East Carolina School of Medicine), Dr Carlos Bedrossian (Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Diagnostic Cytopathology*), Dr Sudha Kini (Division Head of Cytopathology, Henry Ford Hospital) and Dr Tilde Kline (Director of Cytopathology, Thomas Jefferson School of Medicine).

Throughout his career in cytopathology Dr Gupta demonstrated a unique dedication and commitment to the field, and led a stimulating, encouraging and productive environment while Head of the Cytology Unit at Wellington Hospital. He mentored and delivered high-quality training to his technical staff and medical residents in cytopathology, who have been very appreciative of the knowledge they have acquired from him. His New Zealand medical clinician colleagues continued to consult with him on cases in his latter years. Dr Gupta's career was marked by insight, accomplishment, and the ability to share his insight with others—for which he remained very modest.

He died peacefully at Wellington Regional Hospital on 25 September 2012 aged 80 years, surrounded by his 4 children Deepak, Dinesh, Sunita, and Suvira and their families; his wife, Mrs (Smt) Swaran Lata Gupta, predeceased him in 1981. He also leaves behind 6 grandchildren Shikha, Anshuman, Krishant, Vikesh, Anjali, and Aaditya Raj. He is greatly missed and remembered by family and friends, including extended family in India (Delhi, Varanasi, Gwalior).