

JOHN WALKER-SMITH & CAPGAN

John Walker-Smith is Australian, graduate of the University of Sydney. He has lived and worked in London since 1973.

He is one of the pioneers of paediatric gastroenterology.

In 1984 he had the concept of the growing importance of chronic diarrhoea in children across the world but particularly in developing communities. The widespread introduction of oral rehydration therapy had led to a remarkable fall in death associated with acute diarrhoea. However chronic diarrhoea remained an important problem with a significant morbidity. Malnutrition was a notable outcome in many cases. In order to focus on this issue he convened the first meeting on the complex interaction between chronic diarrhoea and malnutrition, He invited Sandy McNeish to cohost the meeting which was duly held in London 5-7 November 1984. He decided to give the meeting a commonwealth context because of the unique opportunity, the commonwealth provided, to bring people from developed and developing countries together, who use the same language and approach to these problems. The meeting was co-sponsored by the British Paediatric Gastroenterology group, the Indian academy of Pediatrics, the Bangladesh Paediatric Society The Australian College of Paediatrics The Paediatric Association of Nigeria, Malaysian Paediatric Association, Canadian Pediatric Society, Paediatric Association of Nigeria and Singapore Paediatric Society. A book resulted from the meeting.

The second Commonwealth Conference on Chronic Diarrhoea was initiated by Santosh Mittal and was held in New Delhi 29/11/1991 to 1/12/1991 .

The third conference was held in Hong Kong in 1994 hosted by Peter Sullivan . At that meeting he initiated the foundation of CAPGAN after consultation with the Commonwealth Secretariat. John Walker-Smith was elected chairman, later he became President and has been called Founder President. He attended fifth conference in Darwin Australia in 1991 and later in London in 2011, Colombo 2013, and Toronto 2019

He was present on behalf of CAPGAN, at the creation of FISPUGHAN at the World Congress in 2000, as President of CAPGAN. He secured CAPGAN'S status as an associate member .

He has fostered collaborative studies and training programmes between Britain and developing countries of the Commonwealth. He had commonwealth fellows from Bangladesh, Nigeria, Tanzania and New Zealand, in his training programmes at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children . He had two PhD's from Bangladesh. He ran a diploma course in paediatric gastroenterology.

His research programme at QEHC in collaboration with Allan Phillips centred on post-enteritis diarrhoea syndromes, cow's milk sensitive enteropathy, rapid stool viral diagnosis of gastroenteritis and its management. QEHC with so many patients either as first generation immigrants or as children of immigrants from Sylhet in Bangladesh was important in showing him aspects of problems in developing communities.

At St. Bartholomew's Hospital his research with Tom McDonald, focused upon Crohn's disease in childhood. He continues to be life president of Crohn's in Childhood research appeal CICRA.

He has published extensively in research publications and text books, most notably Diseases of the Small Intestine in Childhood, running to four editions (fourth with Simon Murch as co-author)

In his retirement he has moved over to the humanities, first history of medicine for 9 years, MA IN Christianity and the arts King's college, London. Now he has just published a book of 66 poems entitled HOPE, BEAUTY AND FRIENDSHIP (Austin Macauley and Amazon)