



# A gem in preventive care

DR. RAJAN RAVICHANDRAN - HEALTHCARE



*“Avoid reaching out to salt shakers”.*  
*“Monitor and manage your Blood Pressure regularly”.*  
*“Make informed choices on a balanced and healthy diet”.*  
*“Provide options for no/low salt food products”.*  
*“Implement a color-coded labeling system to identify high-sodium or high-sugar products”.*

Dr. Rajan Ravichandran, a highly renowned nephrologist affectionately known as RC, the “Salt Doctor” who has devoted his life to the field of kidney health, promotes these straightforward and pragmatic approaches to tackle the intricate issues related to kidney health. He firmly believes that by encouraging behavioral changes, offering informed choices, and ensuring access to healthier food options, one can significantly contribute to the prevention and treatment of various medical conditions.

On a conversation about his philosophy, approach and success, he consistently emphasized the crucial role of "common sense" in the mindset of both patients and medical practitioners when it comes to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of medical issues. Being the seventh child

in his family, he found that most professions had already been chosen by his older siblings. He decided to embark on a path in medicine, unknowingly setting the course for a life

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dedicated to nephrology. Through his expertise in the field, he has transformed the lives of countless kidney patients, providing life-saving interventions, promoting longevity, and greatly enhancing their overall quality of life.

After a brilliant academic career in Mumbai, where he achieved the top position in the university, Dr. Ravichandran was awarded a scholarship and directly placed under the guidance of the head of Medicine, who also happened to be the Head of Nephrology. This marked



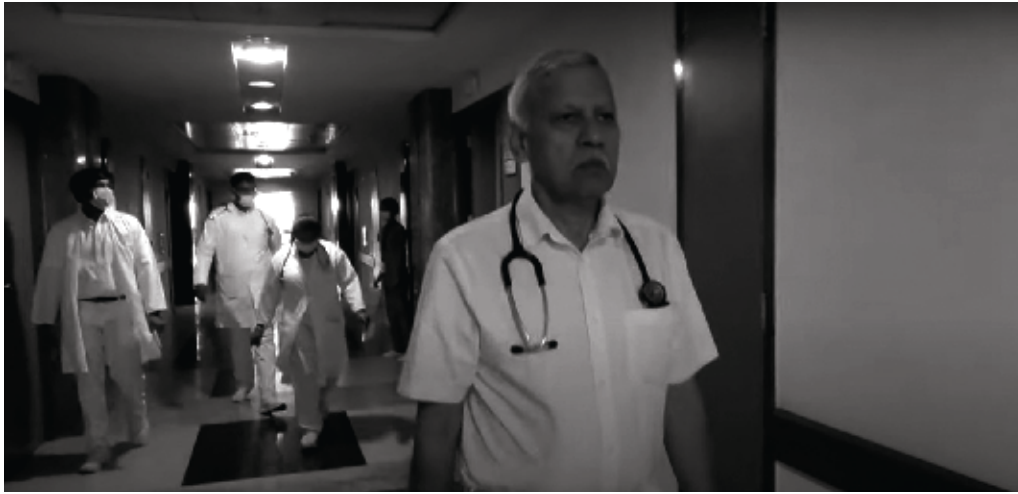
the beginning of his remarkable journey in the field. Over the years, he honed his skills and expanded his knowledge, eventually becoming a tutor and assistant professor at KM Hospital and GS Medical College in Mumbai. This period allowed him to witness the transformative power of medical education and the profound impact it could have on patients' lives.

Dr. Ravichandran embarked on his journey in Chennai in 1983 when he joined Apollo Hospital. However, driven by a desire to make a more significant impact, he ventured out on his own within a year and founded the Madras Institute of Nephrology at Vijaya Hospital in 1984. This marked a new chapter in his career, where he focused on providing specialized nephrology services to patients in need. In 2008, Dr. Ravichandran merged the Madras Institute of Nephrology with MIOT Hospitals, where he currently serves as the Director of Nephrology. This merger allowed him to expand his practice and leverage advanced technologies to deliver even better patient outcomes. Dr. Ravichandran's dedication to innovation and improvement in patient care has driven him to develop novel treatments and techniques that have revolutionized the field of nephrology.

Dr. RC's pioneering breakthrough includes the utilization of Polyallylamine Phosphate Binder, a non-calcium containing resin, a substance capable of effectively attaching to and eliminating phosphorus build-up in kidney patients. Although this drug was accessible overseas, it was challenging to procure in India. To address this, Dr. RC collaborated with IIT Madras to patent this exceptional medication, which continues to be extensively employed throughout the country.

In 1988, Dr. RC made another significant innovation by playing a pivotal role in the development of an acute dialysis machine. Instead of a full-fledged dialysis machine, he devised a minimum viable model that specifically targeted the removal of excess water during emergency situations. By prioritizing affordability and accessibility, these innovations have not only greatly improved patient outcomes but have also advanced the field of nephrology.

Dr. RC's exceptional abilities transcend his expertise in nephrology. He possesses an extraordinary talent for prioritization, devising practical solutions, making prompt decisions and collaborating with the right individuals, ensuring that his innovations are not only affordable but also accessible to all.



Beyond his clinical work, Dr. Ravichandran is deeply committed to serving the community. In 1997, he founded the Sapiens Health Foundation. This initiative was sparked by a patient with Parkinson's disease which Dr. RC astutely diagnosed at the very first sight and thereafter successfully treated.

This foundation aims to provide support and financial assistance to kidney disease patients, with a focus on prevention and improving their quality of life. Initially, the foundation prioritized subsidized dialysis and post-transplant medications. However, over time, there has been a significant shift towards "Prevention", recognizing the substantial costs and detrimental impact on quality of life associated with corrective treatment for kidney diseases.

The foundation has actively promoted awareness through nationwide lectures, protein screenings in college and school students around Chennai, walkathons, informative websites, and booklets on medical awareness, including the publication of two editions of the "Save Your Kidney". Additionally, the foundation has organized impactful campaigns and conferences on salt reduction,

collaborating with renowned professors and institutions in the field. As part of its recent silver jubilee celebration in March 2023, the Sapiens Foundation brought together patients and beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds who shared their remarkable life-saving and transformative experiences.

Upon encountering a child patient with Cystinosis, a rare disease in the eye, he became aware of the exorbitant cost of treatment, amounting to lakhs per year. Motivated to make a difference, Dr. RC established the Cystinosis Foundation in 2013, dedicated to addressing the specific needs of patients affected by this rare disease. Presently, the foundation has registered 46 children, making it one of the 11 foundations worldwide focused on Cystinosis.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Ravichandran made a sharp and significant observation regarding the potential of Indomethacin, a drug patented in 1960 which was commonly used for rheumatoid arthritis, as a suitable treatment for the disease. By deeply observing the similarities and the inflammatory nature of COVID-19 and its impact on lung function, he explored the use of indomethacin, an anti-rejection



medication. Clinical trials on this demonstrated promising outcomes by reducing inflammation and preventing clotting, leading to notable improvements in patients' conditions. Notably, Dr RC's advocacy of this treatment extended to his patients, some of whom achieved remarkable recoveries. One such example is the story of a patient who experienced such a significant recovery that he decided to cancel his air ambulance reservation. This individual, who had been in a severe condition, contacted Dr. RC personally to express his gratitude for saving his life.

He highlights the significant role of salt in people's diets, emphasizing that excessive salt intake not only raises blood pressure but also damages blood vessels, even in the absence of hypertension. He is clear that reducing salt intake by even a small percentage, one can prevent various health complications. He pragmatically highlights the importance of observing the color of urine as the best indicator for determining adequate water consumption and emphasizes that water needs vary for each individual and cannot be a one-size-fits-all recommendation.

He strongly believes in Medicine being a blend of Science & Art and points out that

a combination of observation, clinical examination and patient history assessment is important for effective treatment. Consulting over hundred patients every day, he is quick to point out that it becomes very possible with efficient time management, brevity of engagement and application of required protocols.

Dr. Ravichandran's dedication to the field of nephrology and his tireless efforts to improve patient care have earned him global recognition and respect. As we envision the future, Dr. Ravichandran is fully dedicated to a comprehensive 10-year project involving over 100 physicians nationwide. These physicians will act as pivotal points for driving various initiatives aimed at shaping the field of nephrology and bringing about positive transformations in the lives of numerous individuals affected by kidney disease.

His inspirational journey illuminates the transformative power of expertise, experience, dedication, focus, and practical innovation in the medical field. With these qualities, Dr. RC emerges as a true and complete healthcare champion of Chennai.