

**Obituary**

**Professor Anil Malhotra**

**August 25, 1949 – August 21, 2007**

**Professor of Clinical Psychology, Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre, Postgraduate  
Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh.**

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It is difficult to write an obituary for Prof. Anil Malhotra without getting flooded with many personal memories and emotions. In fact, it is difficult even to imagine that one has to write this obituary: it all seems so unreal – after all, he still seems to be very much alive and amongst us! Which, of course, he is, in a manner of speaking – through his teaching and work, through his love and affection, and through his passion and dedication for what he believed in.

After graduating from Panjab University in 1970, Dr Anil Malhotra did his MA Psychology from the same University in 1972. He further pursued his higher studies in the form of Diploma in Medical & Social Psychology from Bangalore University, Bangalore in 1975 and, finally, was awarded with Ph.D in Clinical Psychology from NIMHANS, Bangalore in 1980. He maintained a lifelong professional and endearing personal relation with NIMHANS and its numerous faculty members.

Dr Anil Malhotra, of course, had a lifelong professional association with PGIMER, Chandigarh. He joined PGIMER, Chandigarh in 1979 as a Research Officer at the then World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre in the Department of Psychiatry. After a brief stint as a Lecturer in NIMHANS, Bangalore, he joined back PGI in 1981, where he gradually rose to the prestigious position of Professor of Clinical Psychology in 2002 at the Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre.

He was a very distinguished scientist, researcher, teacher and esteemed faculty colleague. He was a Life Fellow of a number of learned societies and was the President of Indian Association for Social Psychiatry & Indian Association for Child & Adolescent Mental Health. He was the honorary and visiting professor at numerous institutes in India and abroad, was decorated with a number of prestigious national & international awards, and acted as a Consultant to numerous government and non-government organizations in India and abroad, including WHO & World Psychiatric Association. He guided several Ph.D theses in Indian Universities and was a co-guide for several M.D. theses as well. He was an appointed external examiner in a number of institutes.

His diverse academic interests included drug abuse & alcoholism, epidemiology, psychosocial and behavioral management, self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, and national-level drug control policy and programmes, to name a few. He had more than a hundred scientific publications in national and international journals of repute, and authored and co-authored numerous books and book chapters.

Apart from these more objective parameters, his true spirit of academic and teaching prowess would be vouched for by the many, many students (including myself) with whom he had spent endless hours discussing things in a truly unique, informal, warm and cozy style. The generations of students who have had the good fortune of being in touch with him can never forget the characteristic personalized way of his teaching.

Professionally, probably the most important singular contribution of Prof. Malhotra was in the field of drug & alcohol abuse. Ever since the inception of the Drug De-addiction Programme of the Ministry of Health in 1988, he had been very actively involved with all its aspects, and was instrumental in setting up the Drug De-addiction & Treatment Centre in PGI. He pursued the interests of drug and alcohol de-addiction management with an exemplary zeal, which was far beyond the routine call of duty, and, in this process, inspired and mentored a whole generation of professionals in this area.

Words can, however well expressed, never ever reach the profound sense of loss for those who had seen and known Professor Anil Malhotra not just as an academic teacher or colleague but also as a man. He was a very warm and hospitable human being, always reachable, always there, always eager to help, radiating a characteristic warmth and exuberance. He has touched so many people's lives in so many ways even he would not remember, but they would. All of his colleagues and his students would have memories of their association with him, memories of very personal nature that they would treasure. Yes, I do have my own. As I started, it is difficult to write his obituary without getting flooded with many personal memories and emotions.

Prof. Anil Malhotra is survived by his wife Professor Savita Malhotra (who needs no introduction in this forum), his daughter Aseemita and his son Sanyam.

His loss, both as a person and as a professional, is irreparable. But Prof. Anil Malhotra will be remembered as a great enthusiast, academician, teacher, mentor, administrator and visionary. And as an unforgettable person.

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