

“In seeking absolute truth we aim at the unattainable and must be content with broken portions.”
Sir William Osler

Hi Everyone

This week's Departmental Acknowledgment goes to **Shuvo Ghosh**. There are many things to acknowledge Shuvo for, but this is specifically attributed for his seminal work on a recent effort of successful advocacy in the realm of human rights. Advocacy is part and parcel of our Departmental mission and is a CanMEDS competency for all physicians now.

Shuvo played a vital role in recent passage on March 20th of the only amendment thus far to Canada's Human Rights Act. This amendment, formulated in private member's bill C-279 (An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code) specifically includes transgendered Canadians under the protection of the Human Rights Act.

An essential part of how we identify ourselves is our gender identity. Just imagine the pain a young person experiences if the biology (male or female) they are born with does not align with how they feel on the inside. This misalignment is something over which they have no control and cannot be held responsible for. That they can be discriminated against on this basis is akin to discrimination over any aspect of our identity such as gender, ethnicity, religion or disability. It is in my view simply unacceptable in an enlightened society that has as its bedrock the fundamental value of equality before the law for all persons.

A developmental pediatrician, Shuvo has long had an interest in gender identity issues in the pediatric population. This interest has led to the emergence of a Gender Variance Program at the Children's which addresses this vital issue in children as young as 4 in a collaborative multi-disciplinary approach that is so necessary with such a complex issue. Shuvo has emerged as an acknowledged world leader in this topic. His involvement in Bill C-279 is but a natural extension of his clinical passion and commitment to this issue and those affected.

Shuvo was where he should be when the Bill was passed: in the gallery of our national parliament. Indeed prior to the vote one of the members of the house read into the record a letter Shuvo had written to the NDP caucus on this matter. I am proud to say that the letter received a standing ovation from some members of the House (www.youtube.com/watch?v=GS-lkESJ03c).

Please join me in congratulating Shuvo on doing the walk for others in human rights. Consider too in this context the following quote from Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) who lived through the horrors of the Third Reich. I can never read it without a shiver going down my spine.

First they came for the socialists
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Jew.

Then they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a Catholic.

Then they came for me,
and there was no one left to speak for me.

Have a great weekend everyone

Michael