

November 18, 2022

It is hard to believe that today is Dr. Saleem Razack's last day as a MCH physician. It seems like he has always been here and felt like he always would be. But Saleem is moving on to new challenges at BC Children's Hospital and a new life in Vancouver. I have heard Saleem say that McGill and the Montreal Children's Hospital "made him". And this may be at least partly true. But it would also be fair to say that Saleem played a huge role in making both the McGill FMHS and the Montreal Children's Hospital what they are today.

I first met Saleem in 1993, when I came for my pediatric residency interview, and he was the chief resident. To an impressionable medical student, a chief resident was an impossibly important person who must hold great power. My next interactions with Saleem were as a junior resident when he was a PICU fellow... still an impossibly important person who must hold great power. But as I got to know him, the hierarchy I imagined dissolved and I learned that not only is he a passionate, devoted, smart and thoughtful physician, but a kind, introspective, self-deprecating person who is able to somehow balance a deep commitment to social justice with not taking himself too seriously. Saleem has been a key part of what makes the Children's a great place to work. He cares about people and he's not afraid to show it.

Saleem has also made major contributions to the hospital, the department, the university, and to Canadian medical education in his more than 30 years here. He served as Program Director for the General Pediatrics Residency program from 2001-2008, leaving a lasting impact on the program. Saleem was also the inaugural Director of the Office of Social Accountability and Community Engagement for the Faculty of Medicine. He did ground-breaking research on medical school selection processes in Canada, which contributed to concrete recommendations on how admission to medicine in Canada could be made more equitable, fair, and responsive to the needs of the Canadian population. He also leads a national committee devoted to developing Canadian-specific curriculum and competencies for the care of 2SLGBTQIA\* people. Saleem has had a major impact through his leadership in advancing the goal of equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels of medical education in Canada. Saleem was ahead of his time, promoting collection of demographic data on students entering medical school to identify disparities. Under his leadership, McGill was the first medical school in Canada to collect such comprehensive data. Now this type of data collection is the norm.

We are all fortunate to have benefited from having Saleem as a colleague for so long. UBC is lucky to get him. After all these years I realize that my first impression was almost right on: Saleem is an impossibly important person. He never really *held* the great power I imagined he had when I was a medical student. But he knew he had the power to make a difference.

We are going to miss you Saleem.

Have a good weekend.

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