

Emely Liranzo
Victoria Jaramillo
Alyssa Shevlin

Dr. Latha Chandran Interview

(Section 1)

Person interviewed: Dr. Latha Chandran

Interviewee's title or position: Pediatrician, chief of residents at Stony brook University Hospital, and undergraduate medical educator.

Date, time, and length of interview: This interview was conducted on November 5th at approximately 3:00 pm. This interview lasted for about 40 minutes.

Your objective in conducting this interview: It was centered on the obstacles that Dr. Chandran faced while being here in the United States.

(Section 2)

Description of the pre-interview research (What did you find out prior to the interview about the person and/or place with which she is affiliated? How did you prepare for the interview?)

We searched for Dr. Latha Chandran in Google, and we found out that she is a pediatrician in East Setauket, New York and is affiliated with Stony Brook University Hospital. She received her medical degree from University of Kerala Medical College and has been in practice for 31 years. She is one of 108 doctors at Stony Brook University Hospital who specialize in Pediatrics. Dr. Chandran has many publications in which she emphasize mostly in medical education, disease in children, and programs for youth. She is an outstanding physician with honors and recognition for most of the achievements she has made. We prepared our questions for the

interview based on the research we did, mostly using her publications as a source. We asked her about her background and personal experiences since she moved to the United States.

List your interview questions.

1. Where did you grow up?
2. What occupations did your parents and siblings pursue?
3. Did you ever consider a career other than medicine? (Please explain.)
4. What were your reasons for moving to the United States? And how did you learn the language?
5. What inspired you to specialize in pediatrics?
6. What were your reasons for developing an expertise in contraception, diaper rash, genital warts and pneumonia?
7. What personal and professional goals matter the most to you?
8. We noticed that you have many publications and even won two awards (Bridges to Excellence Recognition and NCQA Physician Practice Connections). How did you manage to achieve so much in your career?
9. Did you face any particular hardships while you were pursuing your career in medicine?
10. Was it difficult to be a woman in medical school? (Why or why not?)
11. What advice would you give us as we pursue a career in medicine?

(Section 3)

1. Did you get complete answers to your questions? Explain

At the time Dr. Chandran was answering our question, she always answered what we asked her with details of her past experiences, always bringing more details to answer our questions. When we asked her: “what inspired you to specialize in pediatrics?” her answers were not

straightforward, she started with her past experiences when she was in University of Kerala where she specialized in gynecology, then when she moved to the United States to do her residency it was difficult and full of challenges because she didn't go to a medical school in the US. With some influence she was accepted into Stony Brook University Hospital where she did her residency in pediatrics.

2. Was your interview structured, unstructured, or mixed? Explain

Our interview was mixed, but mostly unstructured. We followed the sequence of the questions we prepared, but flexible in asking open questions as Dr. Chandran was responding. This allowed us to get more deep information and understanding in what she was saying. Like when we asked her: "What were your reasons to come to the United States?" she responded that she moved because an arranged marriage where his husband was living in the U.S. something that was part of her culture. With this information we asked her more in depth and personal questions based on her arranged marriage, like what her parents were expecting, and if that was what she wanted. We were flexible in developing new questions that weren't in our list.

3. What probing questions did you use? Explain

One of our probing questions was: "What did you mean by cultural shock?", she answered that in India doctors are held in respect. They don't communicate if the patient has cancer for example or if the family request it. Here in the United States things are different, nurses yell at doctors saying that they are the worst in the area, where in India there's more respect. This is what she meant by cultural shock.

4. Explain your team approach. That is, who did what?

Each person in our group asked mostly the same amount of questions from our list. We also approached to her differently in terms of open questions in our interview. Our focus was to know

more about her and get to the deepest responses from her. This interview was conducted like a mixed structure interview because we tended to stick to our questions, yet go off track enough for Dr. Chandran to have the opportunity to say what she needed to.

5. Did the interviewee give you any documents or references to articles to read, or did she mention other people for you to talk to (or research)? Explain

Dr. Chandran didn't provide or suggested us any document or mention people to follow up, but she focused more in giving us awesome advice like, "Whatever you do, be the best", "In life you have to take some risk and be prepared to fail", "If you do your best people will notice you", "Follow what your heart tells you to do, because if you do then it's a journey". This advice was strong and significant to us, as we want to pursue a career in medicine.

(Section 4)

Insert your interview notes/write up here. Remember to be accurate and concise.

Consider what was said, any emerging trends your interviewee mentioned, different interpretations, and recommendations for follow up interviews.

Interview Notes:

- Born in Kerala, India (which is the most southern part).
- Mother was a housewife, father had a degree in law but is a banker, brother has an engineering degree and sister is in higher education.
- Went to an all-women's college
- Language was not an issue -- India is a British colony, so English is taught
- The mother wanted a child that was a doctor. The brother was ultimately the chosen one but he didn't want to be a doctor, so Dr. Chandran decided that since she was good at school she might as well go for it.

- She was the youngest in medical school at the University of Kerala.
- She came over to the United States at 17 for an arranged marriage. “Although it was an arranged marriage, it doesn’t mean it was a forced marriage” (Dr. Chandran).
- She realized he was good to his family so she knew that they would be the perfect match since she is a family person.
- Applied to Stony Brook residency three times but got denied every time.
- She wanted to work at Stony Brook because it was convenient (close to house and children, only had one car).
- After getting a residency program at Lincoln Memorial Medical Center in New York City, a fellow employee saw what she was capable of and recommended her to Stony Brook, where she finally got accepted.
- After being there for three months, she was asked to be chief resident, where she finally resigned because of the stress. (Made work schedules for employees, dealt with paperwork, etc.)
- She DOES NOT specialize in genital warts, diaper rash, etc. She does specialize in pediatrics and adolescent health though. When she was in India she had a lot of experience in gynecology.
- Wanted to be invisible throughout her residency
- She has won numerous awards for her work
- Works for undergraduate medical education at Stony Brook University

Recommendations: Our interview went exactly like we pictured it would go. We had a mixed structure interview, so we had both prescribed questions and open ended. We gave Dr. Chandran the opportunity to say what she needed to and go off on tangents about topics that she thought

was important. It was a comfortable environment and we felt like she was one of us. We recommend for follow up interviews to be honest and understanding. If you disagree with what the individual who you are interviewing has to say, tell them, it will open up a new conversation. Also, elaborate on what they say. If there is a topic that sounds interesting to you, ask them more about it. Another recommendation is to make sure to do research about the person you are interviewing prior to the interview, it will give you more to talk about and help you understand what they are saying. Listening is also a key recommendation when conducting an interview. A final recommendation would be ask what you don't know. When asking what you don't know it makes you seem like you are interested in what the individual has to say, along with learning something that you didn't already know. This also opens up to new conversations and it makes it much more personal.

Different Interpretations: When conducting this particular interview with Dr. Chandran we didn't really have any problems interpreting what she had to say. She very clear on all the information that she had provided us with. Although the information was clear for the most part, there was one detail that was confusing. Dr. Chandran stated within her interview that she had traveled to the United States at 17 years old for her arranged marriage. Traveling to the U.S at 17 is possible, but she also stated that she had obtained her medical degree by then. In the U.S it is almost impossible to have completed medical school at 17, but we aren't aware of how the education system works in India. After reviewing the audio recording, we noticed this, so it was not addressed within the interview. We left out this information while presenting because we didn't want to give false information, so we stated that she traveled to the U.S "at a young age." Overall, we were able to clearly interpret the information that Dr. Chandran had provided for us.

Commented [CL1]: The confusion of the students regarding when I moved to the US is clear in this paragraph.

Trends: When conducting this interview, there were numerous trends that were brought up. Dr. Chandran made it clear that one way to be successful is by never giving up. The idea of never giving up was constantly brought up throughout the interview. She used personal stories to make more relatable for us to comprehend. For instance, her experience of applying for a residency program showed how determined she was to be a doctor. Although she got denied several times, she never gave up. Another trend that was often seen throughout this interview was to make sure you pick a career that you love. She made it clear that having a career that makes a lot of money isn't worth not being happy. "A job that makes \$750,000 where you aren't happy doesn't compare to a job that you love where you are making \$75,000" (Dr. Chandran).

(Section 5)

Your analysis: What aspects of the interview did you find to be particularly meaningful?

One of the aspects of the interview that was meaningful to us, was how Dr. Chandran used her perspective and experiences, like applying to Stony Brook Hospital, to show us how people have to persevere. She applied to Stony Brook University Hospital to do her residency program, but she was rejected three times every year. She began applying elsewhere even though it was inconvenient, she eventually got accepted into a residency program at Lincoln Medical Center in New York City. When she started her residency there, she got some connections who made Stony Brook to take her in consideration. When they called her for the interview, Dr. Chandran was pregnant, which was a disadvantage for her because of domestic responsibilities. They asked her what was she capable of, she reply: "Once I come here I can show what I am capable of", and that was the attitude they liked. She was finally accepted and then they offered her a position where she was asked to be chief resident after only being there for three months.

What aspects were not useful?

One of our questions was: “What were your reasons for developing an expertise in contraception, diaper rash, genital warts and pneumonia?” Dr. Chandran was a little impressed with this question, and she asked us where we got that question from. We told her that we did a little research about her and we found this information. She just laughed and said that she did her expertise in pediatric. In terms of diaper rash, genital warts, and pneumonia she is not in that area, but is something that she doesn't feel uncomfortable with.

What more would you like to know?

When interviewing Dr. Chandran, there wasn't a lot of information about her contributions to U.S- Asian relations. Although she talked about her upbringings in India, she didn't discuss what she had done to help both India and America. When doing research on her, information about her life other than her career wasn't really provided. We understand that she has had many successes, such as awards, but during the interview she didn't touch upon if any of these awards were related to U.S-Asian contributions. Personally if we were to re-interview her, I believe we would ask more questions focusing on her background in India rather than her career.

What other in-class presentations did you find particularly useful? Explain

Although all of the in-class presentations were well conducted and helpful, there were some that stood out upon the rest. For instance, the presentation on Ambassador Julia Chang Bloch that Melissa, Maria and Stephanie presented was extremely helpful because it provided us with both an insight on her personal life and her career. They began the presentation with a detailed biography of Ambassador Bloch. They started it by telling us about her upbringing in Chefoo (now Yantai) China and her family life. They then continued their presentation by including details about how she got started in her career. One detail that stood out was why she decided to join the Peace Corps. Bloch ultimately joined the Peace Corp as a result of John F. Kennedy's

assassination. She felt like he dedicated so much time to his country and that she should do the same. “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” (John F. Kennedy). This was a quote that Ambassador Bloch often lived by. Growing up her father constantly reminded her she needs to dedicate time to her country, because it has done so much for her. During this presentation, we enjoyed the personal stories that were described between the interviewers and Ambassador Bloch. By including personal stories, it made the interview more personal and relatable, which was seen during the presentation. This presentation was also very well organized. They were well prepared and knew exactly what to say during both the presentation and audio clip. Having a well prepared presentation makes it much easier for their listeners to comprehend the material, rather than going back and forth. Another presentation that was particularly useful was the one about Jennifer Chou and her career with Radio Free Asia. This presentation was extremely useful because it primarily focused on her contributions to U.S-Asian relations. They began their presentations much like the other groups and discussed her upbringings within Taiwan. Chou was an only child and had a normal upbringing. She pursued an education at UCLA in Massachusetts. Her family would often watch the news, which eventually gave her an interest in journalism. Her mother wanted her to be a career woman because her mother was never able to. Learning this detail about her life was crucial because it described the relationship between children and parents within Asia. Majority of the time here in the United States we pick career paths based on our own interests, not because of what your parents want you to do (although this is true in some cases). One important detail that was described within this presentation was that Jennifer Chou didn’t experience any “culture shock” when she came to the United States. This was important because this was a major topic that was discussed within this course. By discussing the idea of culture shock, they included their in-class

knowledge into their interview, which demonstrated their understanding in the course. We also enjoyed the fact that they emphasized their presentation on how it was to be a woman within this field of work. This was significant because this course is focused on women and their contributions within U.S.-Asian relations, which is exactly what Jennifer Chou had accomplished. They discussed how Chou often was discriminated against because she was a woman, but that didn't seem to stop her. Her main focus within her career is looking at human right issues that are associated with women and what she can do to fix them. This presentation was extremely beneficial because it gave us an understanding of what this course was really about. It opened up our eyes to how powerful women's contributions can be to not only the country that they are focused on, but others that are also in need.

Publisher's note (3/16/2017)

The following are corrections made by the interviewee after reviewing the student report of the interview. The corrections correlate to the phrases highlighted in yellow in the student report above:

Latha Chandran's corrections to the Student Interview AAS 2015 report (submitted 3/15/17)

Interviewee's title or position: Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, Professor of Pediatrics and Board Certified General Pediatrician

Section 2: In 2015 I was in practice for 23 years (not 31)

Section 3: She completed her residency at Stony Brook University Hospital after having started it at Lincoln Hospital (there was no "influence," etc.)

Question 3: Here in the United States, patients have more say in their care. I have personally been yelled at by nurses during my intern years, whereas in India there is more respect.

Section 4: She started medical school at 18, got married at 25 and came over to the US with a green card at 27 years of age. She would not have come to the US if it weren't for her marriage.

Section 4: After being at Stony Brook for three months as a senior resident she was offered the position of a fourth year chief residency which she successfully completed (there was no resignation of any kind).

Section 4: Wanted to be invisible throughout her medical school in India due to fear of hazing (not residency).

Section 5: ...but she was rejected three times. Delete every year.

Section 5: She just laughed and said that as a general pediatrician she has some expertise in all common problems that affect children, but she was not a super expert like a subspecialist.

2017 Update

Dr Latha Chandran as of 2017, is the Miriam and David Donoho Distinguished Teaching Professor and the Founding Director of the Donoho Academy of Clinical and Educational Scholars. She currently serves as the Vice Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs at Stony Brook School of Medicine. In 2016, Dr Chandran was named a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor and subsequently inducted into the SUNY Distinguished Academy.

