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## BOOK REVIEW

### Book review on the Mr Oswal's autobiography *Globe Trotting and 62 Years of ENT*

**Toshio Ohshiro**

*President of the 18th International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine; Past Secretary General of the World Federation of Societies for Laser Medicine and Societies; Founder and Past Editor in Chief of Laser Therapy*

As Vasant Oswal's professional colleague and friend, it gives me immense pleasure to review Vasant's biography, published and launched in Edinburgh in the U.K. in May 2022 at the Annual British Medical Association conference.

I met Vasant at the annual meeting of the Form (Preparatory Committee) of the World Federation of Societies in Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS). I was elected Secretary-General and Vasant, Honorary Treasurer. Subsequently, our encounters went on for many years at the various international laser medical, dental, and veterinary conferences in different parts of the world.

Vasant Oswal was born in India on 13th September 1934. Following his medical studies in Pune and Mumbai, he travelled to England in 1963 for further post-graduate studies. He was awarded Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (FRCS, Ed) in 1967. In the UK, traditionally, the surgeons are addressed as Mister. So, Dr Vasant Oswal became Mr Vasant Oswal! A job offer as Consultant E.N.T. Surgeon at the North

Riding Infirmary in the town of Middlesbrough in England in 1970 sealed his career, which continues in various roles to date!

When Vasant arrived in England in 1963, the N.H.S. was merely 15 years old. We learn how it was shaped to be a Darling of the nation, albeit with many shortcomings. There were many social and cultural changes during his career, skilfully interwoven from 1970 to 1995, when he retired. Technological advances in the diagnosis and surgical management of E.N.T. conditions brought new opportunities to leave the trodden path in the surgical practice. The book provides insight into how a completely novel way of undertaking surgery with the laser came into existence, something that we all take for granted! Vasant took the lead and decided to acquire the carbon dioxide laser for his patients. Undeterred by the lack of funding from the NHS, he raised the money by public appeal. The first laser in the UK with articulated arm delivery of the cutting beam to the operation site was installed in 1982. However, the surgery with the light beam was so uniquely different and unknown.

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Being the first to get the laser in the U.K. meant there was nowhere to learn how to use it. Vasant undertook many bench experiments on the steak from the butchers and used various power and exposure settings to understand the laser interaction with the biological tissue. Video recording allowed him to learn the laser interaction frame by frame. The word spread in the media and television channels. His theatre was swamped with surgeons from all over to learn more about it. 1983 saw Vasant chair the First British Conference on CO2 laser in ENT, attended by over one hundred participants from the UK and overseas.

He set up Hand-on Cleveland International Laser Course in 1983. It ran for 28 years, teaching over 400 surgeons. Numerous overseas trips followed to run courses and chair conferences worldwide. He authored and edited three reference-quality books with international authorships. Vasant received many awards, medals, accolades, honorary memberships of the learned bodies etc. The Royal College of Surgeons of England awarded him a rare honour of membership by election (FRCS, Eng.). Vasant was invited to St Peters-

burg in Russia to teach many young doctors from the old U.S.S.R. He also helped create a thousand-bedded health care facility in his hometown in Pune, India, of a high academic standard accredited by the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

The book is bound in hardcover and printed in colour. The narrative is compiled in a short story format and richly illustrated with photographs. It describes how Vasant undertook the pioneering work to develop and teach laser usage in E.N.T. surgery through educational lectures and hands-on courses on E.N.T. in various parts of the world. He is always accompanied by his wife, Nirmal, who is equally known worldwide for her unequivocal support of his work. The book details India's daily life and culture during the second World War and the aftermath of its division into two nations, India and Pakistan. We encourage anyone interested to download a complimentary copy using this URL (978-90-6299-292-8\_epdf) on your browser. The hard copy is available for purchase by contacting the publisher in The Netherlands (details in the online copy).