



VEERAPPAN CHITHAMBARAM

Born and raised in south India, Dr Chithambaram Veerappan known universally as Veerappan, studied at Madurai Medical College, graduating in December 1992. He came to England in 1977 where, after seven years in geriatric medicine, he branched out to do anaesthetics, with the hope of doing intensive care medicine. Working in Harrogate, Stafford and Birmingham before taking up a staff grade post in intensive care in Tameside hospital in 1990, he quickly established himself as a trainer. He showed enthusiasm for developing the cutting edge of critical care practice early by becoming proficient in ECHO well before it was mainstream, and by changing the culture of his ICT to focus on flow and not just pressure at a time this was not seen as important. By 1992, despite being a staff grade, he was running the unit. In 1995 he was made an associate specialist in ICU (the first for ICU in the UK), passed EDIC in 1996, moved to Charing Cross London for 18 months before finally moving back to the north west, working at the Royal Oldham hospital since 2003. He is a very understated man, but immensely capable. He recognised the deficit in training in his region and quickly set about building a strong education programme, first by developing local guidelines, then establishing a EDIC 2 local exam centre and opening a teaching programme for Manchester University medical students.

Forming firm friendships with a number of leading critical care thinkers, Veerappan was encouraged to develop educational work, progressing to establish his excellent Annual Critical Care Symposium, starting in 2004. This meeting quickly developed in the unique informal manner that typifies the man but belies his drive, ambition and unparalleled organisational skills. By 2006, the faculty was truly international and the programme expanded to include excellent workshops on broader topics, such as ethics in intensive care and the advance nurse practitioner role in ICU, etc. By the time he celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Annual Critical Care Symposium in Manchester, he had a faculty of 52 from 5 continents and 425 people attending; it's the meeting that everyone wants to be invited to!

Building on success, he started the Ultrasound In Acute Care Course in 2009. The 4th such course took place recently with 40 delegates and 12 machines. In 2010, Veerappan successfully organised an international critical care symposium in Chennai, India, attracting more than 50 international faculties along with the Indian faculty and it was a great success. After this, he typically invited the entire faculty to his home village 400 miles to the south to celebrate his wedding anniversary – a truly wonderful occasion.

To me he is summarised by this perspective comment about him, "you have created a very special meeting, low on glitz, hype and preening and high on humanity, thoughtful debate and passionate exchange. This is an achievement for which you deserve the highest congratulations". He was awarded the Distinguished Member of the Intensive Care Society of UK award in 2013, the first to a non-consultant. He richly deserves this accolade from the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine given the unbridled enthusiasm and selflessness with which he has promoted critical care. I am proud to give this citation to him.

GEOFFREY BELLINGAN
ESICM Secretary

