

Citation on behalf of
DR Michael Roy Joseph SURY
for Honorary Membership of the
Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland.

Given By Dr Jonathan Smith, APAGBI ASM Newcastle 2024

After qualifying from Kings College Hospital in 1980, Mike had anaesthesia training at Worcester, St Barts, Alder Hey and Kings. Overall, he is perhaps most well known for his work on sedation. He says it all began with his research training at Barts that included a project testing a potentially safe and effective sedation technique combining midazolam and nalbuphine. One day, unexpectedly, his boss asked Mike to give him the combo for an endoscopy. His boss remained unconscious for hours, and getting him home in black cab taxi was especially challenging.

His time at GOSH began in 1990 when there were only 2 sessions of MRI per week available and Mike was given both. Soon the demand for GA MRI sessions outstripped the supply and the alternative and controversial subject of sedation was considered. Using ideas first developed in Birmingham, Mike and a small team developed the first UK Nurse-led sedation service which has continued to this day. Its safety depended on choosing on safe doses and selecting children who were low risk. They published it in the Lancet.

Also in the 1990s, untrained oncologists were using ketamine to sedate children for painful procedures. To stop this Mike setup a TIVA GA service in a room on the oncology ward using a combination of propofol and remifentanyl both by hand delivered bolus, not by an infusion pump. The technique's success depended on potent analgesia which, Mike noticed, could only be relied upon when there was apnoea – mask ventilation was essential but only for a minute or less.

By 2000, the rise of laparoscopic surgery, which prolonged operating times, necessitated more “outside rooms”. Mike volunteered to service new dedicated suites for endoscopy and interventional radiology and these have grown. In particular Mike was enthusiastic about IR because, he says, even though it can be chaotic, it is mostly about anaesthesia in sick children, and very little to do with surgeons!

Concerns about the safety of sedation in children, especially for endoscopy and dentistry, triggered a NICE guideline committee. Mike was its chairman and guidelines were published in 2010 which in essence stated that sedationists should be adequately trained.

Over his career Mike has published 50 original papers and in almost all of them he made sure that trainees or medical students were co-authors. In respect of students, Mike was adamant that any student who applied for an elective should be made welcome and he made it his job to inspire them. He is especially proud that one of his earliest students has just been awarded a PhD at GOSH – albeit in oncology! Among his academic achievements he has co-edited a very large UK textbook in Paediatric Anaesthesia, a PhD about EEGs of infants awakening from anaesthesia, and as the representative of the APA on the NAP5 committee (Accidental Awareness) he was a co-author of several landmark papers including the first audit and estimate of anaesthesia activity in the NHS.

Together with all the NAP5 committee he was awarded the Humprey Davy medal by the Royal College of Anaesthetists. At GOSH, he was given a special award for helping an abandoned and distressed child on the top deck of a bus. And so as they often do, things come in threes, the APA honorary membership will be his third award.

His says his objective in retirement is to remain as happy as he has been over the last 40 years married to Rebecca. They have three adult children and an infant grandson. The next phase is to complete the restoration of a tumbledown house in Suffolk and to be able to play jazz guitar. Rebecca wants the house finished first!

I propose Mike as an Honorary Member of this Association and wish him a very long and happy retirement.