

## Physician Profile: Adity Bhattacharyya, MD, FAAFP

■ AMANDA N. BRUCK, MS



**T**o some, being a family physician might seem like the easy choice, but Adity Bhattacharyya, MD, FAAFP, chose the field because she knew it was exactly the opposite. “I view myself as a puzzle solver,” she says. “I would never want to be restricted to just one thing, and that is why family medicine appealed to me.” She views the work she does as a puzzle that needs to be solved. Whether it is working on a challenging diagnosis, or keeping her knowledge fresh, she recognizes that she has to figure out how the pieces fit together.

She has certainly demonstrated this mindset throughout her life. Dr. Bhattacharyya received an MBBS from Lady Hardinge Medical College at the University of Delhi, India and continued her medical education abroad. She received her board certification in Obstetrics and Gynecology while in Europe before completing Family Medicine residency training at St. Mary Hospital in New Jersey in 1997. On top of working as a family physician, for the first five years of her career she moonlighted in the Emergency Room. “I wanted to get that experience...to keep working with patients in a different way,” she explains. Learning as much as she could, even from a seemingly different area of medicine, helped contribute to her success as a family physician.

Even now, she has not slowed down. As the Associate Director of the Hackensack Meridian Health JFK Family Medicine Residency program, she has a variety of responsibilities. Currently, she is invested in working with community and population health issues, including ensuring people receive the vaccinations they need to keep themselves and their community healthy. Beyond working with patients, she also teaches everyone from residents to undergraduate students both in the classroom and on-site. She is particularly excited about

working with the Human Dimensions of Environmental Change program, teaching courses for the National Research Council. And, on top of everything else, she is lending her immense knowledge to the academic world by contributing to the Swanson’s Family Medicine textbook.

While Dr. Bhattacharyya has no shortage of interests, women’s health is particularly important to her. She works with many women and children in her practice and has a passion for making sure they receive the best care. The idea of talking to young women about female and sexual health might make others uncomfortable, but as a female physician, Dr. Bhattacharyya knows how valuable it can be. “It should start early, as early as puberty or even before,” she says, noting that beginning to address feminine health in adolescence can lead to better long-term adult care. She prides herself on being able to connect with her female patients, creating an environment in which women, particularly young women, can communicate about their health, experiences and needs.

Her passion for women’s health also extends to prenatal care and new mothers. “It is such a critical time,” she explains, “it is so important for these women to continue to receive care, both for mother and baby.” One particularly exciting way of innovating care given to expectant and new mothers is through group sessions. The prenatal group visits are among the highlights of the residency program and are attended by a large number of patients. The group sessions allow women to come together to discuss any issues or questions they have in a setting that connects them to others who are going through the same experiences at a time that otherwise might feel very isolating. Group visits are not exclusive to prenatal care however, they are used in a variety of patient populations.

Dr. Bhattacharyya’s varied passions and activities make her an excellent

family physician, but it is clear that her ability to connect with patients makes her extraordinary. She notes that her relationship with patients can be crucial to treating them. “You order tests to try to find the solution because you have a relationship with the patient and you use your knowledge. Knowing the patient and the social issues that impact them gives the insight. Those are the things that make family medicine fun.”

Family medicine is a puzzle that needs to be solved. This doesn’t just refer to the patients, but the field as a whole. Dr. Bhattacharyya knows that family medicine in the United States is facing challenges in a changing healthcare environment, dealing with a lack of interest in family medicine, insurance, competing interests and more. But she also sees great potential for the future. She believes that family medicine should be the core of the healthcare system. Having spent time in other countries, Dr. Bhattacharyya has seen how effective it can be to have family medicine be a larger part of patient care. “My dream for the future of family medicine is that every person in the U.S. has access to a reliable family doctor who can guide them.”

Beyond being an asset to Family Medicine in New Jersey, Dr. Bhattacharyya has been an asset to the NJAFP for a long time. She joined the NJAFP as a resident in 1995. She then continued her membership as an attending physician in 1997 and has been an active member ever since, including serving as president and board chair. She explains that her continued presence in the organization is due to its ability to connect family physicians and give them a voice. “The academy brings together the voices, not just my voice, but the voices of many family physicians.” Among the challenges Family Medicine and healthcare face in general, NJAFP is glad to serve a member such as Dr. Bhattacharyya, who will undoubtedly help us continue our mission well into the future. ▲