

Surgeon Profile Series

Professor Meghana Pandit

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Professor Meghana Pandit is Chief Executive Officer at Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) Trust and Associate Fellow of Green Templeton College, Oxford. Prof. Pandit's extensive experiences as a clinician and as a leader have laid the foundations for her career and maintain her guiding principles as CEO.

During her early life in Mumbai, Prof. Pandit was driven by a desire to help people. Her father's work in pharmaceuticals, and aunt and uncle's work as clinicians, cemented her decision to study medicine. She was awarded a National Scholarship whilst studying at G S Medical College and the King Edward Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. Obstetrics and gynaecology quickly became an area of interest, with Prof. Pandit drawn to the speciality for the "perfect mix between medicine, surgery, and people." Particularly, the unique opportunity to help women. After her move to the UK, Prof. Pandit undertook speciality training at St Mary's hospital, London, Oxford and Bristol. The adaptation to a different healthcare system was difficult initially; Prof. Pandit credits her husband and mentorship and guidance from excellent senior colleagues for their support and motivation during this period.

Continuing her work as a gynaecologist, Prof. Pandit spent a year as a Visiting Lecturer in Urogynaecology at Ann Arbor University, Michigan. In this time, she

published peer-reviewed papers and was presented the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' award of Young Gynaecologist of the Year in 1999 for her work. Prof. Pandit shares that this experience was vital to her progression as a leader, not only through her research work and collaboration with colleagues, but by balancing this work whilst caring for her young son in a new environment in the USA.

On completion of further speciality training in Oxford, Prof. Pandit embarked on her first Consultant role in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Milton Keynes - a change that, Prof. Pandit reflects, required inner strength and conviction. Her new role in Milton Keynes was one that would enable her to focus on medical management and leadership. During this time, she undertook training with The King's Fund, becoming a Clinical Director, and later Divisional Director at the hospital. She recalls that learning from challenges throughout this role, inspired her to undertake an MBA at Oxford Brookes University (Distinction, 2013), such that she could apply the concepts that were taught.

In May 2012, Prof. Pandit was elected to Chief Medical Officer at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW), and later Deputy Chief Executive from 2015. During this time, she undertook the Innovating Health for Tomorrow Programme at INSEAD, Fontainebleau. This programme proved to be greatly beneficial, particularly the collaborations with experts in healthcare from a varied range of backgrounds. She went on to implement Lean methodology in UHCW, adapted from Virginia Mason Hospital, hailed as the safest hospital in North America, to improve safety outcomes and empower staff. Throughout this time Prof. Pandit continued her work as a gynaecologist one day a week, enjoying this greatly. She also co-developed the MSc in Operational Healthcare Management at Warwick Manufacturing Group with the appointment as Professor of Practice at Warwick University in 2016. During this time, Prof. Pandit was elected to the Senior Founding fellowship of the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM, UK).

In 2019, she became Chief Medical Officer at Oxford University Hospitals, with responsibilities for clinical safety, outcomes, medical education and research. As is echoed throughout her career, Prof. Pandit credits collaboration with colleagues in aiding her leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. She emphasises the

importance of time spent understanding the viewpoints and knowledge of experts; doing so supported her role as the Chair of Covid Response Steering Group to make holistic decisions for her workforce and patients with full, unwavering commitment. She advises that when leading in uncertainty, be “compassionate, and empathise with people whilst you make things happen.”

Prof. Pandit has been the CEO of OUH since July 2022. Despite now working solely in management and leadership, her experienced background provides a rare combination of an executive leader with clinical training. She values her medical background for her ability to interact compassionately with both colleagues and patients. Her principles of “hard work, commitment, and partnership” have guided her through both clinical work and leadership. Prof. Pandit’s relentless focus on patient safety and staff wellbeing is possibly a different brand of CEO. The focus she refines through continued quality improvement is to enable change at the forefront of the clinical environment.

Prof. Pandit’s next aims as CEO include further work on equality, diversity, and inclusion, adoption of sustainable healthcare, and tackling health inequalities. To adapt to new challenges that may lie ahead, she again relies on her principles: whilst facing setbacks is to be expected, what matters is to “believe you can get where you want to if you work hard, stay motivated to learn, and move forward fast.”