
Zoom On: Dr. Aseem Malhotra, Honorary Consultant Cardiologist - Lister Hospital Stevenage



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Dr. Aseem Malhotra is one of the most outspoken cardiologists in Britain. He is an expert in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart disease and has successfully led the campaign against excess sugar consumption. The award-winning [NHS](#) cardiologist has successfully motivated leading academics, the media and politicians to make sugar reduction a health priority in the UK by publishing commentaries in the [BMJ](#) and mainstream media. Dr. Malhotra supports studies that implicate sugar as the number one culprit driving obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease, and has worked with a leading sports scientist to dispel the myth that links physical inactivity and obesity.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research/assignment?

I trained in interventional cardiology but have also developed an interest in the impact of lifestyle changes on the prevention and treatment of coronary disease mainly because its impact on reducing adverse clinical outcomes dwarfs that of medical therapy. For example reduction in smoking prevalence has had the strongest impact in reducing population cardiovascular mortality in the past few decades. Overcoming the burden of chronic disease induced by lifestyle is the real challenge facing health services in the western world. Unless we deal with this effectively we will fall short of providing the best quality care for patients.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

Transparency of information that is given to patients in a manner that is understandable to them and helping them make decisions that is in keeping with their values and wishes. For example we have to seriously ask whether it's acceptable to consent patients for elective coronary stenting without telling them it won't prevent a heart attack or prolong their life when almost 90% of them believe they're having the procedure done for that very purpose. If we are going to make real progress in improving the quality of care in cardiovascular disease globally Cardiologists need to adopt a more transparent and holistic approach. A paper I published in the Post graduate medical journal calls for [Right Care Cardiology](#). Furthermore we are only now just becoming aware that much of the published literature that has driven clinical decision making in the past few decades is either false or fraudulent. I suspect the next few years will see an avalanche of scientific corruption exposed as it is endemic within the system.

3. What is your top management tip?

Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them. Engage, listen, act. There is no monopoly on wisdom.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

That's a difficult one because there are several. Being the lead author on a paper published in the BMJ on winding back the harms of too much

medicine that included some very respected co-authors such as the chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the Chair of the GMC. But becoming the youngest member to be appointed to the board of trustees of UK health think tank, the King's Fund tops it. It's a very prestigious and independent organisation that advises government on health policy.

5. If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

I really can't think of any other profession other than Cardiology. It's in my blood. For a while at school I considered law because I've always had a strong sense of justice and I even had to make a decision about pursuing a career in cricket but when I realised I was not going to be the next Sachin Tendulkar my mind was made up.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

I love playing and watching sport. Cooking, playing guitar and going to the cinema give me great pleasure.

7. Your favourite quote?

"It is health that is the real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver." Gandhi

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