

Guess who is Bill Gates' Real-Life Hero ? MAMC's Dr Matthew Varghese !!

With a hammer in his hands to check the limb reflexes, a tape to measure the length of hands and legs and a goniometer to ensure precise measurement of angles, he looks more like a carpenter than a doctor. He carries no stethoscope like a regular doctor, but the orthopaedic expert has **caught the attention of Bill Gates**, no less, with the work he has done with polio patients in Delhi.



Dr Matthew Varghese
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The founder of Microsoft recently wrote about Dr Matthew Varghese in his blog — *GatesNotes* — calling him *one of the five persons in the world who he thinks is a real-life hero*. The spare-built man with kindly eyes behind big, round spectacles wasn't about to let his focus wander when TOI asked him for his reaction. "The recognition doesn't make a difference to what I do," Dr Varghese said. "But yes, I hope that it will inspire more doctors and the youth to take up the cause of assisting in the rehabilitation of polio patients."

Dr Varghese, who runs **India's only polio ward, at St Stephen's Hospital** in Old Delhi, wants his ward emptied of patients — and this singular vision spurs him to devote all his time to the rehabilitation of men and women who have been afflicted with polio.

Polio was eliminated from India in 2011. But thousands continue to suffer from the immobility that the disease brought. The polio ward at St Stephen's, one of Delhi's oldest hospitals, started in 1987 with eight beds, and in the early 1990s, when polio was hyper-endemic in India with 200,000 to 400,000 cases reported annually, the ward remained mostly full.

... Once, more than 600 patients underwent reconstructive surgeries to correct the malformations caused by polio at St Stephen's each year. Today, Dr Varghese said, the figure has come down to below 200.