

## Getting to Know Dr. Aditya Pawar, the Lurie Center's Newest Psychiatrist

### **Where are you from originally and how would you describe yourself as a child?**

I am originally from a small town in India called Lucknow. Growing up, I was very curious and persistent. I always loved solving puzzles and figuring things out. I also had a close set of friends since early childhood, and despite being on several different continents now, we've remained best friends over the years.



### **What factors influenced your decision to become a psychiatrist? Have you always been interested in medicine?**

Several factors played a role in my decision to become a psychiatrist, but one of the biggest influences was my time during medical school rotations at a well-known mental health center in India. Those rotations were eye-opening for me—I saw so many different stories, each one unique and often deeply moving. It was heartbreaking at times, but also incredibly inspiring to see how much of a difference the right care and support could make in someone's life.

What really drew me to psychiatry, though, was how thoughtful and nuanced the field is. It's not always black and white—there are a lot of grays, and that's what makes it so fascinating. I loved how psychiatrists had to really listen, not just to symptoms but to the person behind them, to their story; this requires a deep sense of empathy. That combination of intellectual challenge and human connection really spoke to me. Even now, I'm constantly inspired by how psychiatry allows us to sit with uncertainty, to think deeply, and to help people find hope and healing in ways that feel meaningful.

### **If you hadn't pursued psychiatry, what alternative career path might you have chosen?**

If I hadn't pursued psychiatry, I might have explored neuroscience research, diving into the scientific study of the brain and its impact on behavior and mental processes. Alternatively, I could have been drawn to biostatistics, combining my interest in mathematics with analyzing health and biological data. Both fields align with my curiosity about the intersection of science, data, and human behavior.

### **What drew you to join the Lurie Center for Autism and MGH?**

What drew me to join the Lurie Center for Autism and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) was the combination of their exceptional reputation, and the opportunity to contribute to a field I'm deeply passionate about. During my fellowship at MGH, I had a wonderful experience with the department—the collaborative environment, dedication to patient care, and commitment to research were truly inspiring. Additionally, I fell in love with Boston as a city, with its vibrant academic and cultural atmosphere.

My prior work in the field of autism spectrum disorder at the Kennedy Krieger Institute and Johns Hopkins Medical Institute in Baltimore, further fueled my interest in neurodevelopmental disorders.

These experiences allowed me to see the profound impact of specialized, multidisciplinary care on individuals and families, which made joining the Lurie Center a natural next step in my career. The chance to continue working in autism care and research within such a renowned institution felt like the perfect fit for my professional goals and personal passion.

**Do you specialize in a particular population?**

I would say I specialize in caring for individuals with ASD who also have co-occurring Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD and ASD often occur together, so it is quite common. I also work with autistic individuals who have ADHD and substance use.

**How do you stay current with the latest research and treatments?**

I stay current with the latest research and treatments by being highly interested in analyzing research papers and staying actively engaged with the academic community. I frequently participate in peer reviewing and am honored to serve as a guest editor for some journals and as an editorial board member for the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (JAACAP). These roles allow me to critically evaluate new findings and contribute to the advancement of the field. Additionally, I present at professional conferences, and collaborate with colleagues to ensure my practice remains informed by the most up-to-date, evidence-based approaches.

**Do you have any pets?**

I don't have a pet now, but I grew up with dogs. While I was in India, I had a dog who was a beloved part of my life. I plan to have a dog (or two!) sometime soon.

**Being a physician can be very demanding. How do you practice self-care?**

I make time for family, as spending quality moments with loved ones helps me recharge. I also enjoy learning to play the guitar, which is a creative outlet and a way to unwind.

**If you were to describe yourself in three words, what would they be and why?**

If I were to describe myself in three words, they would be **compassionate, curious, and dedicated**. I strive to approach every aspect of life with empathy and a genuine desire to understand and support others, which is central to my work as a physician. My curiosity drives me to continuously learn, whether it's staying updated on the latest research or exploring new interests and perspectives. Lastly, I am deeply committed to making a meaningful impact, in both my professional and personal life. These qualities shape how I connect with patients, approach challenges, and pursue growth.



*Dr. Pawar enjoying a moment at home with his children.*