

Voice of the Expert

What Should be the Future of Medical Practice in India ?

How Medical Practice has Evolved in India in Last 5000 Years ?

Modern Medicine had progressed and had got out of the superstitions and established scientific basis, starting with Hippocrates and steadily progressed with countless pioneers. They all procured inspiration and tips from ancient systems of India, China, Persia and Greece. Slowly technological revolutions started coming in and started replacing clinical methods with laboratory techniques, and the people who wanted to sell technology, marketed them vigorously in such a way that, people and doctors were made to believe that use of technology alone is science. Or only those who used a modern technique, or used the most novel medicine, or investigations based on genes were considered modern, and others were slowly ignored and thrust to the background.

As an outfall of this trend, organ based specialisation made the entry, and the quick fame, quick money, and support from all sources, especially from the business lobby, which happily pushed it forward, all made the doctors leave general practice and even general medicine. Slowly, the most needed family doctors, who would have worked for wellness and cost effective diagnosis and treatment, became unimportant in the eyes of the ignorant public. In countries like India this trend went to the extent of almost total elimination of family doctors, and a total disintegration of genuine scientific modern medicine.

Scientific research is the key for progress of modern medicine. As such there is no replacement of clinical examinations though technological revolutions and laboratory techniques help in delivering modern medicine.

This disintegration and over-dependence on technology rocketed the cost of Medicare sky-high, made modern medicine unpopular among a section of society, and gave ample opportunities for the quacks and alternative systems for a comeback. The only scientific alternative is to solve the problems in modern medicine, because it evolved from all the traditional systems. If that is the case, why should we go back to the dark age of superstitions and false beliefs.



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We need to talk about integration in modern medicine, with policy changes to develop a strong base for medical practice with family doctors, referral system and avoid its disintegration by making doctors hesitate to identify themselves with one organ. Doctors are doctors only when you manage a person as a representee of the society, with all its problems and priorities. A reoriented modern medical practice is the only alternative for the future.

What Changes we have Observed in Medical Practice before Independence and after Independence?

Before Independence it was very bad and still continuing like that in some places.

What are the Impact of Medical Practice in Post-liberalisation Era ?

It has gone from bad to worse.

Should India give Emphasis on Preventive Health or a Curative Health Care?

This question is very relevant because India is ignoring social health, wellness and all the social determinants of health and we are literally manufacturing diseases. With the result that we have ended up as the country with highest disease burden in the world. To address the heavy disease burden we focus on increasing the number of medical colleges and PG seats to bring out more single system specialist doctors, with the objective to make available treatment for all. That too with a health system which is largely controlled by private agencies and corporate bodies whose main objective was profit. The focus on treatment of diseases thus has become oriented towards tertiary care, when in fact India needs

an army of trained family doctors working under government guidelines. Without adequate numbers of family doctors the treatment system anywhere in the world cannot sustain and it is bound to collapse. In India the AYUSH and even quackery is growing in the huge vacuum created by the missing of family doctors. Only the family doctors will have an outlook for blending curative services and preventive care that too working in a community setting living in close association with families and persons. They are certain to work for health and wellness, that too only if they are working under the government without any profit motives. But if family practice is also promoted in the corporate sector as it

has already started, it will only be worse than the USA model which is still a NON-SYSTEM.

What will be the Future Threat in India- Communicable or Non-communicable Disease ?

Future is very bleak in India if we continue like this. If we do not change, the human species itself would be wiped out in another 100-200 years and it would happen at a faster rate in India. When India is going ahead with double burden in diseases, other countries too are catching up with more non-communicable disease, which are increasing all over the world. India with highest number of people with poor nutrition, will be impacted more adversely by the consumerism and the consequent surge of non-communicable diseases. We have been witnessing early onset of all the non-communicable diseases like hypertension, diabetes, cancers and autoimmune disorders. The profit hungry consumerist lobby is still happily fishing in troubled waters. Strong health policy to be drafted by visionary social health workers is the need of the hour.

Growth of pharmaceutical companies definitely

Abolishment of family doctors & overdependence on technology including organ based specialization is making healthcare inaccessible to a large section of population. Commercialisation of healthcare is another challenge.

needed for economic health of the country but there is a perception that pharmaceutical growth have impacted medical practice negatively. Do you feel so? Pharmaceutical

growth with the main objective of profit is the issue we need to rectify. This kind of growth is impacting medical practice as they are given an opportunity to influence the medical practitioners. Why do we allow them to manufacture lifesaving medicines in different brand names? Only the nutritional supplements and vitamin tablets be allowed to be manufactured in different names. Let us make all the pharma companies manufacture all essential lifesaving medicines in generic names only, rather than asking doctors to prescribe in the generic names

Research in India from government, non-government agencies and from pharmaceutical companies are not

optimistic. Also medical practitioners are reluctant to hold medical research in India. Do you feel there is a need for change in attitude and what are the steps that are needed to be taken for India to become a world leader in medical research in future? Research in medical profession is now done only for developing a new medicine or a new technique and always it has an eye on profit. Research in medical field is now guided on the lines of drug trials only and there is no true research on genuine issues that we face.

Availability of life-saving drugs to all people & integration in modern medicine is very much required. Government needs more focus on medical research.

a system on the lines of these socialist countries. In USA 50 million people are unable to get treatments in spite of being the richest nation. The rich persons are not getting the best treatment in USA due to wrongs in the system. Every person should have equal rights in getting access to the social determinants of health and treatment facilities, that alone should come up and that alone will ensure sustainable health care.

Do you Feel Medical Practice should be Insurance based like USA?

NO- it should never be like USA at all, it is the worst model in the world, it is NON-SYSTEM. What India needs is universal insurance cover under the government controls as in Canada and the Scandinavian countries with the entire health system controlled directly by the government. Even if the hospitals are owned by private persons, we can evolve

Do you Feel there is a Need for Change in Medical Education Policy at Present which Mostly Concentrate on Individualistic and Technological Aspects of Modern Medicine ?

YES, very much- we need to change the MBBS curriculum with the main objective of bringing out large numbers of family doctors. Majority of the MBBS doctors (70-80%) should be made to choose family practice as a career option, not by pressure, but by incentives.

Thank you Dr P K Sasidharan (PKS) for your answers. We appreciate the time taken by you and we are sure that our readers will be benefited immensely.