

# Interpathy Research and Role of Health Universities

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## INTRODUCTION

India is the only country in the world which has got different systems of medicine functional for centuries. We have Ayurved, Unani, Siddha as well as Homeopathy (AYUSH). The number of doctors of these AYUSH system is almost equal to the number of modern medicine doctors. If we add these numbers, then the doctor: Population ratio of the country will be as good as developed countries. Somehow the policymakers and experts are tempted to convince the nation of shortage of doctors and the need to produce more MBBS doctors. Not going into that controversy at this point, let us understand that these doctors from other pathies have occupied the general practice sector of the country to the extent of 80 to 90%. In many cities you will not find a MBBS doctor practicing as a general practitioner. Most of the villages get their health care from these doctors. One must understand that these systems exist because people of the country want them. They have survived the test of time. The magnificent success stories of modern medicine have not extinguished them. Now there is a lot of hue and cry about the ugly face of modern medicine in this era of globalization. When I am writing this chapter, a news item in a leading newspaper has quoted the unethical clinical trials conducted in the country by multinational companies with the help of greedy doctors killing thousands of innocent people. The cost is another concern. As a result of all these factors, people are in search of alternatives. They then resort to Ayurved or Homeopathy. Certain diseases like arthritis, asthma, skin diseases, and age-related ailments are the strongholds of these pathies. The ground reality is that people do use medicines from different pathies. There are many claims from doctors of other pathies about overwhelming successes in treating diseases from common cold to acquired

immunodeficiency syndrome! Unfortunately, most of the claims are by individuals who try to pose themselves as demy Gods and rarely their successes translate into generalized success for that pathy. As a result, many people get cheated by false claims and lose money and precious time. The time has come to compare the effects of medicines from other pathies with modern medicine. This is the interpathy research I wish to write about.

## WHY WE SHOULD CONDUCT INTERPATHY RESEARCH?

- People in India give patronage to different pathies.
- Other pathies have survived for centuries in this country.
- The failures of modern medicine in some diseases have made it mandatory to search for alternatives.
- There is also a need to find safer, cheaper, and effective treatment options for established treatments in modern medicine.
- The role of other pathies as health promotional measures needs scientific validation.
- There is a need to provide a platform for these pathies to prove their strengths.
- There is also a need to understand the limitations of these pathies in a scientific manner to save the innocent people from exploitation.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED FOR RESEARCH IN OTHER PATHIES

- *Lack of patients:* Unfortunately, very few of these colleges have adequate patients in outpatient department and inpatient department (IPD). The IPD patients are very few.
- *Lack of government support:* In a state like Maharashtra there is not a single homeopathy college run by the government. There are no health facilities available where doctors of other pathies can be appointed and practice their system of medicines. Mostly they are used as adjustment in tribal areas or remote areas and required to use modern medicine.
- *Lack of funds:* This is a problem for all medical colleges and naturally more so for colleges of other pathies.
- *Lack of respect from doctors of modern medicine:* Very few doctors from modern medicine feel the need to establish a communication with doctors from other pathies. This happens only for securing referrals and

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getting cheap human resource to work in intensive care units of star hospitals.

- *Inability to speak the language of research:* A vicious cycle has set in. Doctors of other pathies are unable to produce evidence to popularize their medicines, which is resulting in less number of patients and vice versa. Many of these doctors speak about patients subjective experiences without any objective evidence to convince the researchers from modern medicine. Lack of exposure to methods of scientific research is responsible for this.
- *Inability to speak the language that modern world understands:* Many times there is an attempt by doctors from other pathies to equate their terminology for a disease to a similar disease in modern medicine. This never matches as “Madhumeha” in Ayurved cannot be matched with diabetes mellitus of modern medicine. Result is disastrous.

### ROLE OF HEALTH UNIVERSITIES

Fortunately, in many states of India, health universities are established. All medical colleges admitting students for Modern Medicine, Ayurved, Unani, and Homeopathy are now under health universities. There are many metros and cities in the country where at least one college of each pathy exists. There are teachers and postgraduate students as well as private practitioners of these pathies. The health university can take lead in this concept of interpathy research. The university can establish a department of interpathy research at its headquarters. Maharashtra University of Health Sciences has such department, though in a rudimentary state. The

department can coordinate the following activities for interpathy research:

- Training interested researchers from these colleges in methods of research
  - Identifying with the help of experts from all pathies the areas that must be focused for research
- Formation of local coordinating teams in cities with colleges from two or more pathies
- Funding interpathy research
- Encouraging joint research between colleges of different pathies
- Establishing special ethics committee that can examine and guide interpathy research
- Monitoring and evaluating the research conducted by these colleges
- Publishing university journal to disseminate results of such trials to the larger audience
- Developing schemes for encouraging students and teachers to undertake interpathy research.

If all this happens I am sure it will be possible for generating evidence as well as best practices in these pathies. The ultimate result would be availability of cheaper, effective treatment options for the patients and mainstreaming of our traditional knowledge. It will also popularize Ayurved, Unani, Siddha as well as Homeopathy (AYUSH) systems of medicine in the world not by hearsay publicity but on the basis of sound scientific evidence that can be cross examined by any critique.

### REFERENCE

1. Principles and practice of medical research. 2nd ed. Jabalpur: M/s Banarsidas Publishers; 2015 February. p. 184-187.