

To be or not to be an oral pathologist



“My message especially to young people is to have courage to think differently, Courage to invent, to travel unexpected path, Courage to discover the impossible and to conquer the Problems and succeed.

These are the great qualities that they must work towards. This is message to the young people”

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

The younger generation belonging to the family of oral pathologists should take up the above quote and start marching forward with a positive mind than grumbling to fall back and cursing the fate thinking that they do not have bright future in oral pathology. What our people fail to understand and realize is that, at the baseline all of us are qualified dental surgeons and we as oral pathologist have a slight edge over others because we know and capable of understanding when a cell is crying and how it is coping with the body system to overcome when there is an untoward happening to the living system. The history also has shown how successful are the practicing oral pathologist in the society. So, it is time to realize that we have a better assessing strength to understand, cope with the disease process and to put the system in right direction so that we never over do any treatment, rather we can work out to find out the modality to improve the patients’ own immune system. Thus, reducing the side effects/toxic effects of the drug. That is where we have to do research the means by which we can help the host cell to fight against the disease. This means by having better knowledge about the disease, how it can be prevented and even to protect, after the disease, has set in. This can be achieved only by converting all the research outcome and put into clinical practice so that all efforts exerted in research does not end with dissertation or with the completion of the course. I have seen many of the postgraduates, have come out with wonderful results in their research projects. The only defect is that they do not

carry forward the hard work they have put in. There are still lot of avenues in exploring dental carries, oral cancer and nutritional disease affecting the oral cavity. I know one of the oral pathologists has invented the delivery of drug system from the dental implant for brain diseases. This is because of bridging the clinical practice and the research work. His work is patented and is being used globally. So, pathologists interested in research can still have bright future by attaching themselves in the reputed laboratories for which they have to be involved and work hard and prove their work ideas by approaching the right place for getting the grants. Only those candidates interested in research can refine themselves further in registering to the PhD courses.

The oral pathologist has lot of avenues in exploring the utility of saliva as a diagnostic tool. A day should come where the saliva to be used if not replacing the blood in investigation of many systemic disorders. This responsibility is fully depending on the budding oral pathologist. After all the saliva is fluid of oral cavity, and if we do not make use of this, who will be in a better position to put in to use. Already I see many projects to find out the markers of many systemic disease and oral cancers. So, it is going to be the era of saliva in future as an effective diagnostic tool and it is time to explore and capitalize it in your own investigative laboratories.

Coming on to the opening in teaching oral pathology. Yes it may look saturated at Present, but the situation is not going to remain same. People will retire and people will replace. So, it is a vicious cycle. For delivering quality education, the infrastructure and the required faculty occupies the central role in institutes. The oral pathology-related subjects are taught in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd years which means $\frac{3}{4}$ of the course time is spent in oral pathology department by any undergraduate student. Unfortunately, the ratio of requirement stipulated is less. The council and the

association should carry forward this difficulty encountered by the existing faculties. Overloading will only compromise on the quality education. But, we oral pathologists also should understand that every oral pathology qualified person cannot get a teaching job which no government can assure, not only for this specialty but for every branch of dentistry. So, we should understand the reality and plan our strategy for future. A powerful saying by Benjamin Franklin will be fit to sum up this note to the budding oral pathologist.

“Focus on strategic plan implementation.

If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”

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