

J-AIM fulfills important need

Dear Sir,

The first issue of the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medicine: Whenever a new journal is born, often one reacts: what another journal? Don't we have enough? Is it really needed?

Fortunately as far this new 'baby' is concerned, it is a welcome addition. There is a need for integration amongst various systems of medicine. So far there has been no Indian journal devoted to integrative practice and understanding of Ayurveda with modern sciences. The Journal thus fills an important lacuna. What does the Journal stand for?

The first issue is essentially devoted to this Integrative aspect with articles by eminent authorities in modern sciences and Ayurveda. The editorial^[1] states that (though) "Historically Ayurveda has been progressive, dynamic and

inclusive ... (however) today it is in need of a renaissance to resuscitate its ... research orientation". This is what has been ailing Ayurveda. No science can be static. Progress is possible only through enquiry, research and research applications.

In the case of Ayurveda, this has not happened at the necessary pace and interest. Darshan Shankar^[2] elaborates its "conceptual framework". The author points out that there is a "demand for pluralism in health care" and a realistic assessment of the inadequacy of any single system to solve health needs. There could and would be several models of integrative medicine. An Indian model with an Ayurvedic pivot will prove to be a pioneering venture.

Bhushan Patwardhan^[3] in his article suggests "Integrative systems approaches ... take the best of what is available from both (alternative medicine and modern medicine)

without bringing hierarchies or even intentions to undermine any for achieving affordable global healthcare” i.e. evaluate the available time-tested “products” of alternative medicine with modern scientific rigor, study efficacy and safety and then accept and integrate (e.g. reverse pharmacology). Ashok Vaidya^[4] comes out with a suggestion of creating (a cadre of) Vaidya Scientists. This seems the most practical solution with a view to widening the base and strength of research in Ayurveda. Scientific rigor and honesty will be its essential elements. Other articles treat quality control,^[5] genomics and Ayurveda,^[6] the need for standard reporting of clinical trials,^[7] and Ayurveda’s role in treating chronic disease,^[8,9] all welcome and relevant. Further categories of article include book reviews, life profiles and history.

How does one visualize the Journal’s future? Its success? This undoubtedly depends upon its contributors. Unless well-conducted research is submitted to the journal, there is no way the Journal can raise or maintain its standard and serve its purpose. Reviews are important but cannot occupy most of the Journal space. To improve quality of research the leaders (and fortunately there are quite a few) of Ayurveda must inculcate research culture in its members, the spirit of enquiry, courage to ask questions, raise hypotheses, test ideas with well formulated, scientifically valid studies, and report results – even if negative. There is an equally important need for modern biomedical scientists to seriously investigate the time tested Ayurvedic remedies, which India has been fortunate to inherit.

As for the Journal, while offering a platform for publishing research and offering encouragement, it cannot afford to lower its standards just to accommodate articles. Let us hope that things move in the right direction, and the Journal becomes an important source of information.

Lastly I must congratulate the Editor-in-chief and his editorial team.

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