

Call to action for Ayurveda

Sir,

This is in response to the editorial 'Envisioning AYUSH: Historic Opportunity for Innovation and Revitalization'.^[1] Bhushan Patwardhan has stated: "Through this editorial, we wish to appeal to our readers to send specific suggestions, innovative ideas and out of the box approaches to expedite the long awaited revitalization of AYUSH systems."

Following the call to action I wish to humbly provide some thoughts from Australia. As indicated in the editorial, we live in an interconnected global village where the obvious benefits of a truly holistic health system of the nature of Ayurveda appeal to many in the Western world. In our societies, chronic lifestyle disorders are increasing, and Ayurveda with its strong emphasis on healthy daily routines and lifestyle has some powerful suggestions.

There are many facets to energizing Ayurveda today. A key point I wish to elaborate on was stated by Patwardhan. "For the revitalization of Ayurveda and health systems, in general, a large number of Vaidya Scientists and Scientist Vaidyas are needed as the real-change agents."

To facilitate his suggestion on standardized diagnostic techniques and to collate data a web-based, password protected site can be established. On that site, diagnostic pro-forma and means of recording treatment outcomes can be constructed that motivated practitioners can sign up to enter data from their daily practice. A working example developed in 2011, from Australia, is "eviDent (www.eviDent.net.au)," in which general dentists can join the group and actively collaborate with other practitioners and academics in clinical based research.

Another suggestion is regarding the use of the mobile smart phones for a diagnostic photography to be uploaded to the database. Also possible is short soundtracks of specific comments by clients.

The gathering of useful data is thus enabled, but then the next step is the use of different research techniques to investigate and corroborate outcomes. I would suggest a vital role for "mixed methods" research techniques as eloquently presented by J. W. Creswell in "Research Design".^[2] Another useful technique in clinical sciences is the "N of 1 Trial" paradigm.^[3] Following a single client or patient can provide scientifically meaningful data if carefully collated to certain protocols.

Apart from the clinical documentation I would like to emphasize and underline emphatically the suggestion to develop a description of "Ayurvedic Biology". This point has been discussed in some depth by R. H. Singh.^[4] "A critical literary and conceptual study of Ayurveda basic concepts viz. *Dosha, Dhatu, Mala, Agni, Ama, Ojas*, and *Srotas* as well as *Rasa-Guna-Veerya-Vipak-Prabhava*, etc., is necessary. We have to present these concepts in understandable language, suitable for creating an appropriate scientific interface for developing appropriate research methods. This part of the study will need collaboration between senior Ayurvedic and Sanskrit scholars and scientist's expert in fundamentals. The goal would be to describe "Ayurvedic biology" objectively."

There is a statement "The future is not something we enter. The future is something we create." – Leonard I. Sweet. To conclude with the words of Bhushan Patwardhan "Today India is poised for a transformational revolution. Let us work together to unleash the true potential of Indian health systems."

This is indeed a lofty contribution India can make to the world desperately in need of a more comprehensive approach to health and vital living.

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