J-AIM receives warm welcome

At the outset, on behalf of the Editorial Board, I wish to thank our authors, reviewers, readers and well-wishers for the wonderful welcome given to J-AIM's first issue, which we are still sending out, in response to both the website and print versions. I would like to take a privileged opportunity to give a glimpse of a few representative messages: RA Mashelkar, wrote “I would like to warmly congratulate you for beginning so brilliantly with the first issue of Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine. This indeed is a very good initiative and a step in the right direction”; MS Valiathan says “The first issue of J-AIM certainly does look impressive. I can imagine the difficulties you must have faced in putting it together and bringing out the issue on time. My warmest congratulations!” Gerard Bodeker emails: “Congratulations on this excellent effort! Out of nowhere other than thought - consciousness - has come, in record time, a very solid and thoughtful first issue, launched on a respectable and ethical e-platform. Well done to all!” It has also been very gratifying to feel that we have struck a chord with the many who commented that the journal is filling a gap, and fulfilling a role that will be useful not only to Ayurveda, but also the integrative approach around the world. Your comments and suggestions will always be welcome, and we shall continue to print a select few in coming issues.

Already at this early stage some aspects of J-AIM are beginning to crystallize. It should be becoming clear from the articles in Education and Life Profiles sections that we strongly support efforts to maintain the purity of Ayurveda in its conception and practice. This issue's Education article, by no less than Jayaprakash Narayana, Vice-President of Central Council of Indian Medicine, continues to emphasize the need for students of Ayurveda to understand Sanskrit and the benefits of reading the ancient texts in the original spirit. The Vaidyas profiled in this issue have also been known for their strong support of traditional Ayurveda, and similarly as exponents of the essential need for Sanskrit study. At the same time, they were so strongly founded in Ayurveda, that they could also incorporate aspects of modern science to advantage without compromising the integrity of Ayurveda.

In this regard, J-AIM is helping raise national awareness of India's need for integrative medicine, and to begin to catch up in this field, where she still lags behind other nations. The Letter from Aviad Haramati, Head of Integrative Medicine at George Washington University, in Washington D.C., is particularly welcome, expressing his reactions to visiting India in early February with the US delegation of eminent scientists from reputed universities (see News and Comment section). The efforts of Navin Shah and the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH), merit special appreciation. Ayurveda and other traditional health practices can form the basis for a new, improved approach to public health, including health promotion, and affordable primary care functions, especially for communicable and difficult to treat chronic diseases. Eventually, examples of successful integrative practice should promote use of Ayurvedic principles outside its immediate field.

This issue's Thought Leadership Article by RH Singh highlights the need for rediscovering the right approach to Ayurveda research to maintain its integrity. It points out that research is not simply to test it as an alternative to western medicine, but is meant to establish the practice of Ayurveda in its own right, from its own orientation. The article by Priyadarshini and Asha shows that rasayanas can have powerful effects. A short communication recounts a preliminary, but important clinical study, one of two in this issue. Radhakrishna has successfully adapted Yoga methods to the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders, managing to achieve remarkable results in a field where the clouds are short of silver linings. Another clinical article by Indudhar concerns a case study of an Ayurveda remedy from the folk tradition. Though not a prospective study, if its promise holds true, it may reduce the incidence of hysterectomies, leading to health and economic benefits. J-AIM wishes to encourage more such case studies on conditions still awaiting affordable solutions.

A review article by Navin Atal summarizes work on Bioenhancers, which has now led to the successful release of Risorine, a preparation in which the bioavailability of rifampicin is enhanced by the addition of piperine. Hema Sharma Datta reviews work on Ayurveda skincare formulations, while Pulok Mukherjee considers aspects of ethnopharmacology and the discovery of new molecular architectures. In the Discussion Kernel, Amit Agarwal exposes the effects of over-zealous reporting of putative toxicity, which we hope will prove an important point for suitable blog discussion, again something in which we would encourage reader participation.

While the integrative medicine movement is taking firm roots in western parts, there is a need for a slightly different approach in the East, where traditional medicine is deeply
rooted in the community. The inspiring work of Ayurvedic Point in Milan is told by founders Antonio Morandi and Carmen Tosto. The Vignette by Girish Tillu transmits the message that Ayurveda has no problem coexisting with modern science, so that the best of both disciplines can be utilized.

This issue also contains other features including Book Reviews, News and Comment, and Future Events sections along with Conference Reports, covering important events spanning four continents. These give glimpses of trends and indications of a growing change in hearts and minds around the world, a willingness to take a fresh, positive look at Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine.

Sir William Osler one of the founders of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and later Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, was a member of New York's Charaka Club, and profoundly interested in Ayurveda and its place in the history of medicine. As a result, Osler was well aware of the cyclic processes that take place in medical opinion over the centuries. In his much acclaimed 'Aequanimitas' address to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine, Osler observed that, “The philosophies of one age have become absurdities of the next, and the foolishness of yesterday has become the wisdom of tomorrow.” The welcome now being given to Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine seems a definite step in such a cycle, where the wisdom of Ayurveda once again becomes appreciated.

REFERENCE

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