

Need for paradigm shift in Research and Development approaches

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the editorial, “Envisioning AYUSH: Historic opportunity for innovation and revitalization” by Bhushan Patwardhan in the June Issue of J-AIM.^[1]

The main issues facing the traditional medicines industry at the present time, especially in the Research and Development (R & D) sector were well outlined by the editor.

The paragraph, “Raising any questions about evidence of efficacy, theory or practice may not be tolerated. Embracing modern methods, scientific investigation and innovations to explore and enhance ancient wisdom may be seen as an insult to its prestige and exalted status. Such an uncritical approach is not likely to lead to the desired revitalization of AYUSH in the long-term, nor to meaningful change in the health sector. Such an easy route of resisting contemporary medical trends would lead to stagnancy, and would be detrimental to the long-term sustenance and growth of AYUSH,” provides a vivid picture of the present mindset and raises all the relevant

questions pointing to the need for a paradigm shift in R & D approaches.

Unfortunately, we still continue with either the “pharmaceutical drug discovery by reductionist paradigm” or hide behind “sitting in the tower of Babel” excuse to defend the “compound interactions give efficacy” theory without even attempting to generate the necessary evidence on “compounds and their interactions to efficacy” correlations. Even the mainstream Pharma industries have started revisiting and doubting their “reductionist paradigm” subsequent to Lipinski’s^[2] view on the need for “scaffold diversity.” However, the complementary medicine groups have not started fully utilizing great advances in analytical methodologies to generate the most needed evidence on chemistry-efficacy correlation. I congratulate the journal and the author for bringing out this timely and thought-provoking article.

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