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Opinion Article

Another Wake-up Call for Innovative Research with Vision

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Abstract

An article titled “Why Tuberculosis Has Not Been Eradicated? Need for Vision and bold Innovative Research” published in 2017 was a wake-up call to Health Research Workers (HRWs) to carryout innovative research with vision. There was no response to this call made solely in the interest of achieving better health. Reasons for this have not been told. May be, this could have been misinterpreted as interferences in their well-established systems of research by a person who has little or no experience in their special subjects. Or, this might have been misinterpreted as questioning their ability to carry out innovative research themselves. This article makes another wake-up call to HRWs.

Priority given for vaccine without trying cheaper preventive methods has been questioned. Importance of a habit of frequent nose blowing to prevent many diseases caused by pathogens which enter body through nose or mouth has been highlighted. Studies have been suggested to confirm its effectiveness because, if confirmed, nose blowing can eradicate corona pandemic and tuberculosis.

Exhortations by enlightened Buddha that “Every human being is the author of his own health and disease” and by Prof. Deepak Chopra (a world famous expert on mind-body relations) that “Almost all your health problems are created or aggravated by your negative thoughts” have been ignored. This may be due to callousness and misuse of freedom for independent thinking which create grave situations which neutralize all efforts to improve health.

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Explains that a judicious use of different systems of medicine, with the approach of pooling benefits, can lead to an “ideal holistic health care system”. To develop this, a series of scientific studies on effectiveness of each system vis-à-vis each health problem and wide dissemination and discussion of these findings are necessary. A necessary first step in the series of studies is to conduct an exploratory study that can throw light on comparative effectiveness of treatment options available from three recognised systems for common diseases. Suggests a study on 100,000 persons to have a fairly large number of sick persons for treatment under each system and to cover sickness during all seasons.

Keywords

Tuberculosis; Vaccination; Blood; Viruses; Influenza

Introduction

An article titled “Why Tuberculosis Has Not Been Eradicated? Need for Vision and bold Innovative Research” published in 2017 was a wake-up call to Health Research Workers (HRWs) to carryout innovative research with vision [1]. Sad to say, there was no response to this. Therefore, I sent copy of this article to some top international research institutions with a request to carry out studies on one or more innovative subjects suggested in that article. There was no response and reasons for rejection are not known. This article is another wake-up call to HRWs with more suggestions for praise worthy innovative research with vision.

Acceptance of Innovative Ideas

When copy of that article was sent to some research institutions of international repute who could show the way, with a request to investigate the effectiveness of some innovative ideas with potential for laudable benefits suggested in that article there was no response. Because reasons for this have not been told, it is not possible to even try to overcome rejection of innovative ideas by HRWs. Only some guesses can be made. Though these suggestions were made solely in the interest of achieving better health, these could have been misinterpreted as interferences in their well-established research system by a person who has little or no experience in their special subjects. Or, this might have been misinterpreted as questioning their ability to carry out innovative studies with vision themselves. May be, international institutions like World Health Organization will study this problem and give suggestions to HRWs to overcome inhibitions and ensure innovative research with vision.

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Choice of Innovative Subjects for Research

Choice of innovative subjects for research should be influenced by broad vision and in depth analyses. A glaring example is how to control corona pandemic. Sad to say, for prevention of cases, importance is given to vaccination alone. HRWs ought to seriously question this importance given to vaccination. It takes years (may be 10 years?) to develop a vaccine. Mass production of vaccine and vaccinating millions also take time. A sophisticated cold chain for vaccine has to be set up if not present already. All this means that vaccination can prevent the disease only after many years and incidence of disease would have continued unabated meanwhile. Why should priority be given to vaccination when large amounts have to be spent for developing a vaccine, a sophisticated cold chain for preserving it and setting up an organization to vaccinate people only to prevent incidence of cases after a delay of many years? Even all this may be a complete loss if the organism mutates in a manner which will call for discarding the vaccine. This becomes more questionable when other preventive methods are not even attempted.

Against this grave background, it is important to investigate possibility of other preventive measures. For example, one possible innovative method of prevention which deserves to be investigated is suggested below. This is based on the scientific fact that corona viruses enter body through nose or mouth and move towards throat, windpipe and lungs.

Keep one nostril closed and blow air as forcefully as possible through the other. Then keep the other nostril closed and blow air as forcefully as possible through the other. Repeat 3 times through each nostril at 3-hour intervals every day, starting at 08:00 AM. These repeated forceful exhalations of air from lungs (blowing nose) will act on tiny viruses like repeated “cyclone storms” when these are in nose, throat or windpipe (or may be even upper part of lungs). Because it is unlikely that viruses will have any special characteristics or powers to withstand these forceful thrusts, viruses (if present) will be thrown out during a forceful exhalation. Blowing nose 3 times is an extra precaution to make sure that viruses do not remain in body. An added benefit will be strengthening of lungs which will help in general and also when viruses reach lungs which are its main target. This effective method is very easy to practice and takes less than 10 seconds only on each occasion and should get highest priority. To prevent possibility of viruses being scattered all over, blow nose in a wash basin which, along with the door knob, should be repeatedly sanitised.

Logical analysis shows that this method can immediately lead to steep reduction in new corona cases if everyone practises this as a habit. But this needs scientific confirmation. Also, whether the suggested 3-hour interval between nose blowing is most appropriate needs to be confirmed. This study has great importance because these confirmations can lead to eradication of corona and help millions.

Following study is suggested: Select a population of 40,000 in a corona hot spot and divide it randomly into four groups. People in three of these groups should be asked to blow nose

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forcefully (as detailed earlier) and the fourth group kept as a control group. Out of the three study groups, one should be asked to blow nose at hourly intervals, another at 3-hourly intervals and the last at 5-hourly intervals. Because of the high incidence expected, it may be enough to study incidence of cases in all four groups after one, two and three months. Period can be extended if necessary. This study will quickly provide information about extent of effectiveness of the method to prevent cases and show which is the most appropriate interval between nose blowing which should be used.

Some similar studies are suggested by this study. For example, there are many more diseases like measles, influenza, common cold, mumps, chickenpox, whooping cough, rubella, tuberculosis etc. which are caused by pathogens which enter body through nose or mouth. It is important to investigate through controlled studies whether a daily habit of frequent nose blowing can prevent the pathogens which managed to enter body from continuing in body and causing these diseases. If these studies confirm effectiveness of the method for preventing many of these diseases their contribution will be immense.

Tuberculosis needs special mention because it is a major global health problem which is caused mainly by entry of tubercle bacilli through nose. It is very important to investigate with an open mind whether daily practice of frequent nose blowing can help to prevent tuberculosis infection.

One such study is briefly explained: Most children get infected before 14 years of age and develop only a primary focus of tuberculosis but get disease only later on. Select a group of 20,000 children of 5 to 9 years age from a high tuberculosis prevalence area. Divide this group randomly into two sub groups. Ask one sub group to practise frequent nose blowing daily and keep the other group as a control group. These sub groups should be strictly monitored for three years about proper use of the method. At the end of each year, the children of both study and control sub groups should be investigated for evidence of primary focus and positivity to tuberculin test. If significantly less number of children in study sub group has primary focus and / or tuberculin positivity, it shows that habit of nose blowing can prevent infection. Extend the period of study if necessary. This finding will be a praiseworthy contribution to eradicating tuberculosis and deserves very high priority.

Another question for study: can the brief contact with body by these pathogens and corona viruses (before they are thrown out of body) lead to the body developing immunity and does this help to prevent occurrence of disease through later infection?

Extending Open Mind Further to Other Areas can Enhance Scientific Knowledge and Innovative Research with Vision

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The Buddha, who is worshipped by millions, said: “Every human being is the author of his own health and disease”. Most scientists may not have become aware of this exhortation by one who got enlightenment or have ignored it as a religious matter. This is due to a narrow mind which believes that only scientists can have bright ideas. Because of this grave mistake they have missed many opportunities for innovative research.

Prof. Deepak Chopra (a world famous expert on mind-body relations) has written in his book “Ageless body and timeless mind” that human body is tuned to survive for much more than 100 years [2]. But, persistent negative thinking is a hindrance. Almost all your health problems are created or aggravated by your negative thoughts.

Both exhortations have been generally ignored and led to wide spread deterioration in health. HWRs ought to study in detail why people do so. One problem is callousness (don’t care; will not happen to me arrogance). The other is misuse of freedom to think independently. Due to these, extensive propaganda and warnings that smoking, drinking and drugs are injurious to health have been ignored by millions of people for years. The lockdown measures in India were ignored by many thousands of migrants. Prohibited large scale attendances also occurred for religious festivals, marriages etc. It is extremely important to carry out psychological and other studies to get rid of such callousness and thoughts which create grave situations which neutralize many efforts to improve health. Developing health consciousness and health discipline in everyone is essential to secure health for all. These should be developed from childhood, e.g., by including these in curricula for secondary education.

Around the world, there are number of recognized systems of medicine. Many consumers of health care tend to choose from the basket of services available from these different systems believing that each system of medicine has its own successes and failures. It is their case that a judicious use of different systems, with the approach of pooling benefits, can be more beneficial. Expanding the idea further, one could set a long-term goal of an “ideal holistic health care system” in which any person with a health problem can approach the “family health provider” who will treat that person if the health care system which he / she practices has the best possible care for that health problem. If not, that person will be referred to a provider practicing another system which has the best possible care. This will ensure delivery of holistic and comprehensive health care that is appropriate for the health problem. Practitioners who offer different systems of medicine will accept this pooling approach, only when they have convincing information on comparative strengths and weaknesses of each system vis-à-vis each health problem. Obtaining such information deserves high priority.

A series of scientific studies on effectiveness of each system vis-à-vis each health problem and wide dissemination and discussion of these findings are essential to create necessary understanding and conviction among providers of health care. This will result in their co-operation for pooling of benefits from available systems of medicine for benefit of sick persons by choosing the system appropriate to each current health problem. This series of studies need vision, open mind, patience and determination.

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To start with, these may be restricted to curative aspects of three well-known systems of medicine e.g., allopathy (western medicine), ayurveda and homeopathy, to avoid operational constraints. Thereafter, other systems of medicine could be investigated. Another set of studies will be required to get similar information with regard to preventive and promotional care provided by different systems of medicine.

A necessary first step in the series of studies on curative aspects is to conduct an exploratory study that can throw light on comparative effectiveness of treatment options for common diseases available from the three selected systems. The focus on common diseases will help in pooling benefits from different systems to reduce sufferings of maximum number of people and thereby increase popularity of this pooling approach. This, in turn, will help to create a demand for extension of this approach for treatment of all diseases as well as to preventive and promotional care.

A by-product of this exploratory study will be information on (a) prevalence of less common diseases (including epidemiologically important diseases) and (b) incidence of serious and life-threatening diseases, including those requiring emergency care. This information can be used to plan well-designed studies to ascertain comparative strengths and weaknesses of different systems for tackling these less common diseases and those posing emergencies.

The proposed exploratory study, and a series of studies which ought to follow on curative as well as preventive and promotional health care, have potential to revolutionize delivery of health care and make it possible to achieve the long term goal of establishing an ideal holistic health care system, which automatically pools benefits from different systems of medicine.

A study population of 100,000 can be chosen to have a fairly large number of sick persons of each type and observed for one year to cover sickness during all seasons. This can be divided randomly into four groups. Persons in 1st group are offered treatment under allopathy, 2nd under ayurveda, 3rd under homeopathy and 4th kept as a control group. Treatment of patients should be strictly according to the practices adopted by the three recognized systems. No experimentation with new medicines or using a system other than the one allotted should be allowed. An informed consent, in writing, has to be taken from patients about their acceptance of treatment from the system allotted. Those who do not accept have to be offered treatment elsewhere under a system of their choice or referred to a suitable health facility. Emergencies and life-threatening problems have to be given suitable advice / referred. Thus, the design and conduct of the study will fully satisfy all ethical considerations.

Field work for the study can be completed in one year (i.e., covering all seasons). Analysis of data, evaluation of effectiveness of treatment, and preparation of report may take another 18-20 months. This can be followed by wide dissemination and discussion of findings.

Importance of These Innovative Studies

All these suggestions justify the wake-up call by confirming that there is enough scope for HRWs to carry out innovative studies with vision if they think out of the box.

Of these, confirming that habit of frequent nose blowing can prevent many diseases caused by pathogens which enter body through nose or mouth deserves priority because it will give immense short and long term benefits.

If the study, which checks whether nose blowing habit can prevent new corona cases and thereby deaths, gives positive findings, it can give huge immediate benefits if practised by everyone because corona pandemic has not only caused about 70 million cases and 1.6 million deaths so far but cause nearly 600,000 new cases and more than 8,000 deaths every day. The fact that this laudable study needs only small funds and can be completed within three or four months is very encouraging.

If the study suggested to check whether nose blowing habit can prevent tuberculosis infection confirms this effect, this should be practised by everyone. Then incidence of infection and formation of primary focus of tuberculosis will be drastically reduced every year. With this yearly drastic reduction in the pool of infected persons from whom tuberculosis cases occur there will be steady reduction in cases every year. Thus, millions of tuberculosis cases will be prevented every year - a laudable achievement. Be encouraged by the fact that this praise worthy study also needs only small funds and can be completed within three or four years.

Studies suggested to remove callousness on the part of people which had resulted in failure of many beneficial health programmes are of immense value and praiseworthy. This series of studies deserve to be carried out with vision, patience and determination.

Similarly, the series of studies with potential to revolutionize delivery of health care and make it possible to achieve a long term goal of establishing an ideal holistic health care system which automatically pools benefits from different systems of medicine deserve a visionary approach with open mind, patience and determination. This is laudable.

Conclusion

To conclude, I draw attention to two proverbs: “It is better to try and fail than fail to try” and “Failures are stepping stones for success”. Successful scientists and inventors believed these and boldly conducted experiments.

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