

## United for Health

The essence of medical research is built on the foundation of medical education that follows the principles of androgogy. One of the pioneers in the field of education, Malcolm Knowles was known for projecting the benefits of adult education that involves experiences and collaborative learning. Inviting and respecting each other's opinions even if they are not aligned with the subject under consideration and providing opportunities for healthy discussion through dignified dialogue is the need of the hour. Respect for each other's ideas, work and profession should be the norm that can boost innovative thinking and productivity.

Different areas of research exist in medicine with researchers working in different fields and systems of medicine, all along trying to prove and bring about an evidence-based angle to their hard work. Alternate medicine systems have been used for centuries in Indian culture with increasing interest in their use in recent years in western countries. Healthcare providers of all systems now have a shared responsibility of preserving this innate treasure of the nation by collaboration and creating united work environments that are mutually beneficial for all. India has a diverse population with beliefs in different systems of medicine which many times come to their rescue as a last resort or the last ditch attempt. A united effort to understand the safety, effectiveness and potential interactions associated with conventional treatments is necessary. The view that there is lack of standardization in these therapies makes it a challenge for comparison and replication of studies. Given these differences and perceptions, it is important to take a sensitive and thoughtful approach when conducting research on alternate systems of medicine. Scientific rigor is essential to produce high-quality research that is credible. However, researchers are expected to be sensitive to the cultural context in which these practices are used and hence should work collaboratively with patients from those cultures to ensure that research studies are respectful and culturally appropriate. For example, cancer, substance abuse and addiction are complex problems that require a multifaceted approach to address. Modern medicine offers a significant range of more objective solutions, utilizing the benefits of mechanisms involved in alternate systems of medicine, including mind-body medicine, spiritual practices and an important component called cultural sensitivity. These approaches are more subjective and in a sense are more humane that should not be ignored. End-stage diseases require supportive therapies to deal with stress and complications while at the same time there is a need to build and boost immunity which may add to improve the quality of life. Combining conventional medicine with complementary therapies may help improve the effectiveness of vaccines to boost immunity and reduce side effects. Integrative medicine approaches may have some potential to enhance vaccine effectiveness. However, more research is definitely needed to establish their safety and efficacy for which good collaborations are essential. Integrated research are essential for bringing out solutions to health problems, be it communicable or non-communicable diseases. Use of traditional medicinal approaches many times utilize indigenously available, accessible and affordable products that have a higher compliance and good adherence to treatment due to their popularity and cognizance in the community. To enable such environments, collaborations and partnerships are essential to bringing together research groups and individuals with varied experiences, contexts and perspectives to fulfill research and development needs. In recent times, incubation centers have been set up as tools to provide such conducive ecosystems and propel novel research by connecting researchers with each other and the industry for better outcomes. The futuristic idea is to support start-ups through incubation centers that would directly or indirectly benefit the community at large. This would also encourage the young health professionals of the country to develop an early interest in research making them good physician-scientists who would deeply understand the needs of the patients in a holistic manner. Investors, including government funding agencies, NGOs and industry, are more likely to park their funds for research and are confident of a positive outcome due to the collaborative efforts. Integrative medicine with collaborations between modern and traditional medical scientists, can provide a seamless transition of innovative research outcomes from lab to clinics and support the nation's economic development by bringing out commercially viable technology and products. Mentors in academia can play an important role and should take on the responsibility of elevating the collaborative research environment that will also induce morals, ethics, integrity and above all, perseverance in those involved that is highly valued and help one to wade through difficult circumstances, including healthcare decision making.

Once the outcome of the research is evidence-based it can have multiple advantages for the local community in providing quality healthcare, economic support for the local farmers, preservation of traditional knowledge passed on through generations, using natural products, reducing the negative burden on the environment due to various healthcare practices. Supporting each other for the larger good of the community health and being united for the sole cause of the health of the nation will take us a long way in improving the quality of healthcare in the country.

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