

Scientific Research-How True it is?

Pranav B*

Department of Shalaky Tantra, Goa University, India

***Corresponding author:** Pranav Bhagvat, Department of Shalaky Tantra,
Gomantaka Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Goa University, India, Tel: +919850459381;
E-mail: pranav_ayurveda@yahoo.co.in

Perspective

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Abstract

If the whole of the medical science is based on research and if the research itself is biased this will lead to immense damage to human life. Current medical research is heavily based on the funds from various companies. Even the research methodology used also needs reappraisal.

Introduction

"If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties."

—Francis Bacon, *"The Advancement of Learning"*, Book 1, v, 8

Research comprises "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humans, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications [1]."

Science [2] is a systematic enterprise that builds and organizes knowledge in the form of testable explanations and predictions about the universe. The scientific research is the experimental analysis for the scientific assumptions or hypotheses to establish a fact. But, does current medical research fit into this criterion?

Methods and Discussion

The science depends immensely on the five senses and the rational thinking. And the problem starts from that point. Because there are many more factors which go beyond five senses. And then there are many factors which are not happening according to rational thinking. How can anyone measure jealousy, hatred, lust, fear, anger by senses? What are the objective criteria? If one cannot measure this how can one measure the effect of these on the body? Forget about measuring effect on

mind. !! If we accept what Nobel laureate madam curie says 'measurement is science'; that means the love does not exist.

And that's where the wisdom comes into play. Wisdom is not only the inference from the gathering of the five senses, it's about facts; it's about processing the knowledge with the help of mind; Finding out what is logical, what is possible, what is logically possible and then coming to conclusion with understanding that the conclusion cannot be one hundred per cent true. Can today's medical science have the guts to have this understanding? We should approve that the scientific ways are but one of the many ways to human wisdom.

The science, especially medical science, should believe that the linearity what it is talking about is non-existent in human bodies. For many years, as Dr. B.M. Hegde says, biology has been using linear relationships in predicting the future. To answer questions like "who will get heart attack?" or "how long before this HIV patient gets AIDS?" we could not use linear relationships. Anything that happens to the human body, the mind does have contribution to it because the former depends upon the later. The human mind is so deep that we can't measure it. And if we start talking about the doctor patient relationship, the spirituality of the patients, the belief factor; the research methodologies of science in its today's definition fails miserably.

The basic requirement for a research is the methodology. Whether the research is full proof or not

depends on the research methods and that's where we cannot find any particular method useful and conclusive. This which can be a part of a theory- theory of chaos- is being accepted worldwide since last 50 years. And this is the only applicable theory to human body because human beings are constantly changing. Humans are the variables.

And if we look at the type of research we do, it will be embarrassing! We are looking for evidence based research. But as Dr. BM Hegde correctly says it is an evidence burdened research. The story doesn't end here. Because what we read in evidence based research journals is only the selective evidence. This selection depends on the researcher which is supposed to be unbiased. But, in today's materialistic world, this seems to be a remote possibility. The classic example of the selective studies published in the journals and thus medical students are made to believe is the use of Statistics by these so called researchers. There are seventeen randomised control trials in the area of 'blood pressure lowering drugs' where the Collective Relative Risk Reduction (cRRR) is 20 per cent and this is the one which is published. If one were to analyse the Absolute Risk Reduction (ARR), it is 0.8 per cent only. That means; when a healthy man with a moderately increased blood pressure takes a blood pressure lowering drug for five years and his chances of survival becomes 96.8 per cent where it would be still 96 per cent without any drug at all for five years only with modifications of lifestyle [3]. Does it make sense? Has any conference talked about this unnecessary loading of the patients by the drugs?

Take an example of a clinical research. We do propose a hypothesis or null hypothesis which forms a cause and effect relationship. Suppose a hypothesis- a drug called Amruta reduces fever. Now the variations start right from the drug. The quality of the drug varies depending upon the collection time, the collection place, the storage, and the pharmaceutical methods for preparing final drug. All these factors cannot be same in each case. Then the patient's genotype, its phenotype, its mind, its consciousness, its place of birth, its upbringing, its place of disease, its digestive power cannot be same. So the drug and the patients both vary fundamentally and how can we conduct a controlled study? What control is this? If we add the types of fever then it adds further. So an experimental study is combination of so many variables that we cannot call it as a full proof method. Science, cannot give absolute proofs of the laws of nature because, although we can test an idea repeatedly, we can never be sure that an exception does not exist [4].

The menace of so called clinical research and the use of developing countries as a laboratory and its people as

guinea pigs are unpardonable. After the Northwick park hospital tragedy in London, the western countries have banned such studies and hence there has been mushrooms called as clinical research organisations growing up in third world countries. This is the worst situation for us as the poor and illiterate people here could not even understand what the consent form is. Is it ethical even to do these studies? [5] And if we believe the study done by Massachusetts University, the medical students and the doctors get to know only that which the wish of pharmacy companies is. In an article published in PLOS medicine, Richard smith, showed how doctors today have become just puppets in the hands of medical companies.

Conclusion

What we need now is the establishment of facts based on the unbiased, neutrally funded way of research done by a researcher who is a true seeker of knowledge. It may take some more efforts that the selective research which comes in our way gets wider with all the aspects of the facts covered and then the real medical science will be developed. This article is based heavily on a book by Dr. BM Hegde titled "what doctors don't get to learn in medical schools."

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