NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF MEDICINE-
A PROPOSAL FOR ITS ATTAINMENT

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ABSTRACT: Integration of various systems of medicine is in the best interest of all concerned. It enables the physician to provide the best available therapeutic care to the patient without undue delay, making way for a better prognosis. It also makes available to him a greater variety of treatment measures hitherto restricted to one or the other system. Integration must be achieved at the theoretical level first by pooling together the facts available in the existing systems. From this pooled data must be formulated newer integrated concepts of human being, illness, etiology and treatment. It is not difficult to achieve such integrations for their already exist certain similarities among the prevalent systems of medicine. This will help to translate ancient wisdom into practice and find proper orientation to modern discoveries. Therefore the adherents of various systems must sink their differences and strive to develop an integrated system of medicine.

"The entire world is the teacher to the intelligent and the foe to the unintelligent. Caraka Vimana 8/14."

Introduction

The prime aim of medical science is promotion of health and cure of ill-health. The practitioners of various systems of medicine endeavour to fulfill this goal on the basis of the knowledge contained in their respective systems of medicine. Unbiased observation shows that treatment. Based upon the various medical systems is able to produce results in many of the cases, but not in all of them. These cases which remain refractory to the treatment given on the basis of one system of medicine often respond to the treatment bases on another systems of medicine have something worthwhile to offer in the management of illnesses, however, which system offers the best treatment in a given case can be found out by the patient only by experiencing them all, involving undue prolongation of suffering. Such a time consuming trial and error method of selection of appropriate treatment method unnecessarily delays the cure with the attendant risks of death and disability. If instead, an integrated system of medicine can be evolved partaking the best each existing system has to offer, it will help in early selection and institution of appropriate therapeutic measures avoiding unnecessary hardship to the patients. Thus we see that an integrated system of medicine will allow us
to offer the most suitable treatment to all patients.

**Obstacle to integration**

The greatest hindrance in achieving such a synthesis of the existing systems of medicine is the opposition their own system to be the best and the only correct system while maintaining a contemptuous attitude towards the other systems. They extol the advantageous features of their own system and ridicule the others. Such mutual antagonism is unwarranted for each system has its own special capacity and limitation. Therefore, rather than conflict and competition among the medical systems, each trying to prove itself better than the others, what is required is co-operation among them to evolve an integrated system of medicine which would combine the best among them.

**Advantages of integration**

Such an integrated system would combine together and bring under one roof the unique features of each of the systems. Their uniqueness will complement each other giving us a total which is rich in all aspects.

The special characteristic of the ancient system of Ayurveda is that, it is based upon philosophical principles which hold true eternally and universally. It provides a unique insight into the nature of human being, of illness, of etiology and of treatment. It lays down guidelines for the cure of ill health and promotion of health. The details about actual management of a given case have to be worked out by deduction form these general principles taking into consideration all the factors laid down in them viz. prakrti (nature) desa (Place) rtu (season) etc.

On the other hand, the modern system of Allopathy is based upon empirical observations. It has exhaustively explored all the observable phenomena and succeeded in discovering corrective methods for various ailments by trial and error experimentation. It has thereby provided means for relieving human suffering.

An integrated system would have the benefit of both, the wisdom of ancient in sights as well as the practicality of modern discoveries. The ancient system of Ayurveda based upon fundamental principles will provide an insight which will provide the facts in the right perspective. The modern science of Allopathy with its wealth of detailed observations will make the medical data practically usable. The empirical discovery of Homeopathy which emphasizes individualization of treatment will help in selection of treatment techniques most suited to individual constitution.

Each without the other is incomplete and its isolated development may lead to erroneous results.

A faulty interpretation of the principles enunciated in the texts of ancient medicine is bound to result into wrong deductions and misapplication. Such misinterpretation is due to the misdirected efforts of a prejudiced investigator who tries to find in the principles support for his own predetermined views. His faulty deductions do not find any practical application and remain as theoretical conjectures. If the
The investigator holds an unprejudiced objective view and verifies the deductions made from the principles in practice, such faulty interpretations and impractical deductions can be prevented.

The modern scientist considers only the observable phenomena as valid and refuses to acknowledge the existence of any metaphysical principles. He formulates a theoretical explanation for their occurrence by inductive logic. Such explanations are deemed to be valid if they are found to be practically workable. However, without the guidance of any general principles such logical inductions are likely to be erroneous. This is because a variety of causes may contribute either concurrently or separately to the production of a single phenomenon. It is well nigh impossible to identify all the causative factors by induction alone. The modern scientist weaves a theoretical explanation around a particular causative factor that appeals to him the most. Likewise, other scientists also put forward their pet theories built around any one of the several causative factors they consider to be of importance. Each of them is able to demonstrate the workability of their theories as proof of their validity. For each of these theories will be found to be applicable in at least a new cases in which the specific causative factor under consideration is operative to be workable to a limited extent. But it is impossible to formulate a theory with universal application by induction alone. The modern scientists with their undue emphasis on the observable phenomena and undue reliance on induction succeed in generating a variety of conflicting opinions each with a limited application. These speculation are merely projections by the investigators of their own view points which do not find universal application.

Thus, both have to keep a check on each other. Modern discoveries have to be understood in the light of ancient insight while the interpretation of ancient tests have to be guided and verified by observed facts. Failure to do so will result into grandiose theoretical constructions which find no practical application or at best have limited application.

Apart from this another important benefit of integration will be that treatment methods, hitherto available to a particular system of medicine will find wider applications. The integrated system of medicine will receive.

A. From Ayurveda- treatment with dietary regimen daily routine (DINACARYA) seasonal routine (RTUCARA) Panca Karma etc.
B. From Allopathy- surgical techniques, parenteral mode of administration of drugs, psychotherapy etc.
C. From Homeopathy- the technique of individualization of treatment, the constitutional remedy which corrects the underlying susceptibility etc.

Of course, it goes without saying that the drugs belonging to the various systems will form a common pool to be shared by all. With greater understanding, we may even be able to judiciously use the drugs belonging to the different systems in combination, either simultaneously or sequentially so as to obtain the best possible therapeutic results.
How can such an integration be achieved?

The various system differ from each other in their theoretical framework. Each system has its distinctive concept about what constitutes a human being, about what is a deviation from a healthy state and what causes this deviation, the management of the illness is based on this understanding about illness and its etiology. Therefore to achieve a synthesis among them we must begin at unification of the theoretical concepts about the nature of human being, about illness and its etiology and about therapeutic management. This can be achieved by pooling together the information about the above mentioned topics contained in the various systems and reformulating unified concepts about them from the data so gathered.

This will involve reinterpretation of ancient texts of Ayurveda so that the deductions made on the basis of the principles enunciated therein do not contradict the phenomena empirically observed. The currently available simplistic interpretations of these texts have been disproved by factual observations. They therefore have only served to hide form out view the profound wisdom contained in the classical texts. In order to avoid repetition of such errors the correctness of the new interpretations must be tested by experimentation. By this approach the ancient wisdom which is locked up in the texts, can be opened with the key of correct interpretation and be made fit for practical use the facts discovered by modern research must now be understood on the basis of these principles which are eternally valid and universally applicable.

Existing similarities

Such an integration at theoretical level would not be difficult to achieve for there already exists some similarities in the existing concepts on the various systems. It will suffice here to cite a few of them. The three principal systems of medicine, Ayurveda, Allopathy and Homeopathy share the idea about the differential strengths of the body which determines the site of the disease process. It is called Dhatu Sarata in Ayurveda, organ inferiority in Allopathy and ‘localisation’ in Homeopathy. The differentiation of chief complaints (Which pertain to the most vulnerable system) from associated complaints (i.e. manifestations through other less weaker systems) in Homeopathy is also based on this same idea of systemic gradient.

The idea that the nature of symptoms depends upon the constitutional make-up of the body is also common to the three systems of medicine. In Ayurveda we have three primary types of Prakirti viz. Vatala, Pittala and Slesmala and the corresponding three types of symptoms to which they are prone viz. the tridosha of vata, pitta and kapha. In Homeopathy three bodily constitutions-called miasm-are postulated viz psora, syphilis and sycosis. (The tubercular miasm is a combination of psoric and syphilitic miasms). The sensation and modalities
of the symptoms are likewise three viz psoric, symptoms are not given any importance in Allopathy but three primary types of physique viz. ectomorphic, mesomorphic and endomorphic have been described by Sheldon. There is a close correspondence among the constitutional types of personalities described in the three systems of medicine. It would not be difficult to build and integrated system of medicine on the basis of these similarities found among the various existing systems of medicine.

**Recommendations**

Formulation of an integrated system requires dedicated efforts by medical personnels belonging to the various systems of medicine. Those physicians who are convinced about the necessity of an integrated system of medicine must come together and endeavour to evolve such a system. They must begin by formulation of newer integrated concepts of human being, illness, etiology and treatment taking into consideration all the levels of human existence viz physical, mental and spiritual. In view of the inability of any one system individually to tackle the existing morbidity there is urgent need to bring about such integration. The adherents of all the systems must there for sink their differences and come together for formulation of a unitary integrated system of medicine.