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Contents

36

BAND-AID FOR DEEP WOUNDS

COVER STORY



03



Editorial: Blood on the White Coat

06



A Gathering of India's Top Medical Minds

10



Doctors in Peril

14



Nourishing The Roots

24



A Whole New Way Of Healing

52



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Blood on the White Coat

Dear Readers,

India is in deep shock and mourning following the brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old lady doctor from RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata. This heinous crime has ignited a wave of outrage across the nation, leading to widespread protests. In response, doctors embarked on an indefinite nationwide strike, demanding stronger security measures to protect those within the medical profession.

The Supreme Court of India took suo moto cognisance of this horrific incident that has shocked the conscience of the nation. The Court strongly criticised the authorities for their inadequate handling of both the investigation and the subsequent violence. In West Bengal, several doctors remain on strike, even after the investigation was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), citing the need for proper security during their duty hours.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this tragedy was the vandalism of the emergency ward at RG Kar Medical College during a protest that saw tens of thousands of participants. The apex court condemned the authorities' failure to prevent this act of violence and questioned the lack of adequate security measures to control the mob.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) too has launched a nationwide protest, condemning the violence against doctors in West Bengal and demanding exemplary action from the state government. The IMA has appealed to the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister, urging the implementation of a central law against rape and to protect doctors and hospitals from violence.

The IMA has insisted that all legitimate demands of the trainee and resident doctors in West Bengal be met unconditionally. The safety and security of healthcare professionals in hospitals are of paramount concern and must be addressed urgently. Given the persistent suffering of medical professionals and the repeated occurrence of such incidents without proper redressal, all associations within the medical fraternity have been urged to join this struggle. The IMA has demanded a zero-tolerance policy against violence targeting doctors and healthcare establishments.

The World Medical Association (WMA) has echoed these sentiments, passing a resolution against violence toward healthcare professionals and institutions. The WMA has urged the Indian government to introduce stronger legislation to combat this growing menace. There is an

urgent need for a national law to address violence in hospitals, ensuring that cases are registered, culprits are arrested, and convictions are made mandatory.

This tragic event has underscored the alarming rise in violence against doctors. The recent 24-hour closure of medical services, organised by the IMA, highlighted the desperation and urgency felt by doctors across the country.

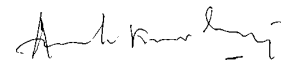
Doctors are the backbone of our healthcare system, yet they are forced to work under constant threat. Ensuring their safety is non-negotiable. Without legal reforms, patients risk losing the very professionals dedicated to saving lives. The ongoing protests are not just a reaction to a single incident but a cry for justice after years of neglect and indifference. The government must take immediate action to implement stringent laws that protect doctors from the violence that has become all too common in the medical profession.

If such violence continues unchecked, the country may witness a significant brain drain, with the best and brightest leaving the profession or the country. Also, these incidents are particularly discouraging for women, who may be deterred from pursuing careers in medicine due to safety concerns. This crisis demands urgent attention.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, J P Nadda, has expressed deep concern over the recent instances of violence against doctors. Strongly condemning these acts, he emphasised the necessity of ensuring a safe work environment for healthcare professionals. He has already raised this issue with the Chief Ministers, urging them to take preventive measures to avoid such incidents in the future.

As we pay a profound and heartfelt tribute to the young deceased doctor, we invite you to engage with the diverse array of articles and features in the August issue. From cutting-edge research to thought-provoking commentary, we hope these pages stimulate your intellect and nourish your curiosity.

Thanks and regards



Amresh K Tiwary,
Editor-in-Chief



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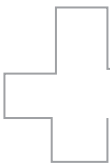
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A Gathering of India's Top Medical Minds



DH News Bureau: Pushpanjali Medical Centre recently organised Pushpanjali Medicon 2024, a national conference aimed at empowering healthcare excellence, in New Delhi. It's not every day that India's top medical professionals gather under one roof to discuss various health conditions and offer advice on leading a healthy life. This rare opportunity drew people of all ages in large numbers to the capital, eager to hear the insights and wisdom of these renowned doctors.

This significant event with the theme "Empowering Healthcare Excellence" was made possible through the tireless efforts of Dr Vinay Aggarwal, the Past National President of the Indian Medical Association, and his dedicated team, who meticulously planned and executed the Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 conference. The event covered a wide range of topics, including Pregnancy-Related Acute





Kidney Injury, Headache Management, the Mystery of Dizziness, Suicide Prevention, Fatty Liver, and issues of reproductive health. The conference also featured a day-long mega workshop that addressed numerous health challenges related to the liver, kidneys, gynaecology, heart, mental health, diabetes, disability, obesity, and more.

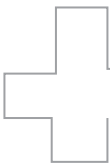
Dr Vinay Aggarwal, Chairman of Pushpanjali Medicon 2024, remarked, "It was a resounding success and a highly beneficial academic session, witnessed by a nationally renowned faculty. The event was relished and is fondly remembered for its academic excellence."

On this occasion, Dr R V Asokan, National President of the Indian Medical Association, commented, "I once described Pushpanjali as a blue rose, but Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 has far surpassed that metaphor. I am at a loss for words to describe the magnitude of what transpired in Delhi. The word 'grand' fails to capture the essence of the academic feast presented by 48 superlative faculties."

He added, "The well-chosen venue was capable of accommodating the aspirations of 1,500 doctors. Many attendees were torn between the two halls, given the richness of the programme. The faculty lounge, exhibition showcasing everything medical, and gourmet food fit for a king added to the grandeur. The sheer scale of the event was breathtaking."

The conference saw the participation of leading doctors from the capital and various states such as Mumbai, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and beyond. Among the most anticipated sessions was one led by Dr Shiv Kumar Sarin, a distinguished clinician and gastroenterologist, who captivated the audience with his talk on maintaining liver health. Dr Sarin emphasised the liver's critical role as the controller





and fulcrum of our metabolic well-being, comparing it to a chartered accountant that meticulously records our body’s intake and expenditure. He highlighted how any surplus, whether from genetic factors or excessive calorie consumption, can lead to fatty liver disease. This condition forces the pancreas to produce more insulin, which can eventually result in diabetes. Moreover, the excess fat in the liver doesn’t just stay there; it circulates throughout the body, potentially leading to complications such as gallstones.

Another notable speaker, Dr Rajeev Sood, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences and former Dean of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, shared his expertise on managing prostate health. His session provided valuable insights into a topic that is often overlooked but crucial for men’s





health, particularly as they age.

One of the most engaging sessions was on the topic “Sex Has No Expiry Date,” delivered by Dr Deepak Jumani, a Mumbai-based expert in sexual health. Dr Jumani spoke with remarkable eloquence on a subject that is rarely discussed openly, especially in such forums. He stressed the undeniable link between sex and overall health, arguing that sexual activity is one of the most vital biological functions, essential for a fulfilling life. Addressing a packed audience, Dr Jumani asserted that sexual pleasure is a personal business as well as a fundamental right, emphasising that all sexual dysfunctions can be managed, allowing individuals of all ages to lead a sexually satisfying life.


In a thought-provoking panel discussion on “Are We Doing Enough to Keep Our Patients Safe?” Dr Vijay

Aggarwal, Dr A K Agarwal, Dr Atul Kocher, Dr Sandeep Budhiraja, and Dr Alexander Thomas shared their views on innovative patient safety measures.

The panel discussion on “Newer Modalities in the Treatment of Endometriosis” featured Dr Jay Mehta, a renowned fertility specialist from Chennai with extensive experience in the field, as a key speaker. His expertise and successful track record make him a trusted choice for infertility care through cutting-edge technology. According to him, “Our facility is well-equipped with the latest technology and state-of-the-art infrastructure, ensuring that patients receive the most advanced and effective treatments available. We provide personalised treatment plans tailored to each patient’s unique needs, allowing us to create a customised approach for the best possible outcomes.”

Dr Mehta further noted that advances in gynaecology have been driven by changing attitudes and practices among gynaecologists, responding to the higher expectations and increased knowledge of their patients, who often seek innovative procedures based on media coverage and non-peer-reviewed information available online. It is increasingly recognised that gynaecological problems impact women’s quality of life in diverse ways. This underscores the value of patient-assessed health status measures in evaluating the subjective severity and treatment efficacy of common gynaecological conditions.

Senior gynaecologist Dr Sowjanya Aggarwal focused on recent improvements in imaging technology, endoscopic equipment, drug treatment, and scientific innovation, all of which have contributed to significant advances in gynaecology. She echoed that laparoscopic and hysteroscopic surgeries, along with medical treatments and expectant management, are becoming the preferred alternatives to major surgeries for many gynaecological conditions.

The success of this unique health conference, where top doctors interacted with both medical professionals and the general public, is indeed a great achievement. The importance of conferences like Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 cannot be overstated. These gatherings offer invaluable networking opportunities with industry peers, critical for both personal and professional growth. They also provide Continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions that are essential for staying updated with the latest advancements in healthcare. Beyond the educational value, these conferences are inspiring and refreshing, offering a chance to recharge while gaining new insights and connections. 

DOCTORS IN PERIL



The Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS) 2023 has sent shockwaves through India's medical community. Despite assurances that doctors would be exempt, the reality is that practitioners now face more serious legal risks

**BY DR NEERAJ
NAGPAL**





The Medicos Legal Action Group (MLAG) comprises approximately 1,250 doctors practicing modern scientific medicine from across India. Our group is dedicated to addressing legal issues that adversely impact the medical profession. The introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita (BNS) 2023, which replaces the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860, has sparked significant concern among the medical community. We wish to bring our representation on this matter as under:

When the BNS Bill was introduced on the floor of the house, the government clearly stated that doctors would not be subject to its provisions regarding alleged professional medical negligence. However, upon the Act's notification, it became evident that the provisions concerning doctors are, if anything, more stringent than those under the IPC 1860. Under Section 304A of the IPC, a medical professional could face prosecution and punishment for death due to negligence, with a jail term of up to two years and/or a fine. The BNS, under Section 106(1), imposes both a jail term and a fine.

It is noteworthy that only doctors practicing modern scientific medicine are specifically mentioned in Section 106(1). Registered medical practitioners under this provision retain the two-year term of imprisonment. However, this raises the question: Will doctors practicing Indian systems of medicine face a harsher penalty of up to five years' imprisonment for death due to negligence, or has it been assumed that these practitioners will never face prosecution for criminal negligence?

No doctor desires to harm their patient. Patients seek medical care for their ailments, and doctors, acting in good faith, strive to assist them to the best of their abilities. Sometimes they succeed, and sometimes they do not.

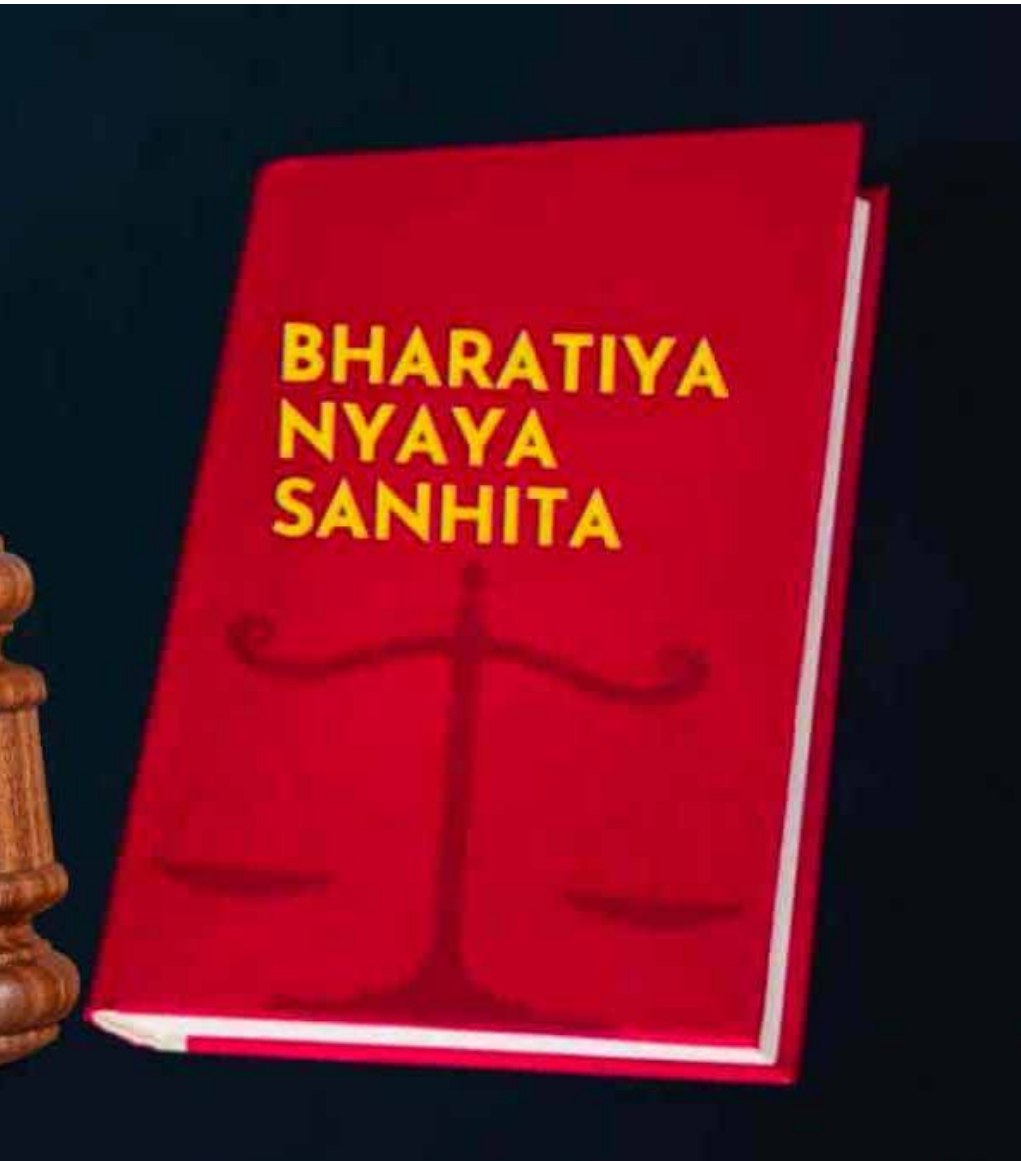
The BNS, under Sections 25, 26, 27,



and 30, provides protection for those who cause harm in good faith and for the benefit of the person harmed. If this is the case, why are medical services provided by doctors being subjected to criminal courts?

Moreover, certain provisions of the BNS, such as Sections 117 and 124, are prone to misuse, potentially leading to the blackmail of doctors due to the ambiguous language employed. Acts causing permanent damage, deformity, or a vegetative state are punishable with rigorous imprisonment ranging from

10 years to life. A vegetative state often results when a patient's brain suffers hypoxic damage during cardiac arrest. Although the patient is revived through Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the heart resumes beating, the individual may remain only partially aware or unaware of their surroundings, unresponsive or partially responsive to stimuli. In cases where patients experience cardiac arrest in a hospital setting, approximately 75% of those revived are likely to end up in a vegetative state. This presents a



dilemma for doctors working in intensive care units, where up to 20 patients may suffer cardiac arrest daily: should they attempt resuscitation or not?

Under the BNS, if a patient dies and the doctor is found negligent, the punishment is a two-year jail term. However, if the patient survives but remains in a permanent vegetative state due to brain hypoxia, the penalty could be as severe as 10 years to life imprisonment. Doctors performing CPR cannot predict whether the


patient's heart will start beating successfully or whether the patient will regain consciousness. Similarly, complications such as loss of vision following cataract surgery due to endophthalmitis, amputation of fingers due to gangrene following intravenous drug administration, or delayed swelling leading to gangrene and amputation after a plaster cast are all examples of permanent damage or deformity resulting from medical procedures.

Our greatest concern is that

punishments are envisioned for doctors who have “knowledge” that their actions may cause harm. It is not in society's best interest to be treated by doctors who are ignorant of the potential side effects and complications of treatments. We have been trained and are knowledgeable about the risks associated with diseases and the potential harms and benefits of various treatment modalities.

A police official seeking to extort money from a doctor in whose hospital a patient has died could easily escalate a case under Section 106(1) to Section 103 due to the doctor's knowledge. Although such acts by police personnel would likely be rectified by the courts, it is the judicial process, not just the final verdict, that is a source of anxiety for doctors. Reputations built over years of hard work can be destroyed by such prosecutions.

Beyond these concerns, there are numerous other sections in the BNS that could create difficulties in patient care, leaving doctors in a constant state of uncertainty when making critical decisions. Shaky hands should not hold a scalpel. We need to empower doctors to do their best in emergencies, not bind them in straightjackets.

We, therefore, urge that medical services provided by doctors be entirely removed from the purview of the BNS. To compensate patients, there are already multiple avenues, including the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), and to punish erring doctors, State Medical Councils are empowered. This is not to say that we advocate for leniency towards doctors who commit criminal acts, such as driving under the influence and causing a fatal accident. What we ask is that professional services and allegations of medical negligence be excluded from the scope of the BNS. 

(The writer is Managing Trustee, Medicos Legal Action Group (MLAG), and Ex-President, IMA Chandigarh)



Nourishing The Roots



Holistic medicine is gaining momentum as a comprehensive approach to health and wellness. Patients across the globe are finding that holistic care offers a pathway to not just treating symptoms but achieving total, lasting wellness...

BY AMRESH KUMAR TIWARY





During one of my visits to New Delhi, I had the opportunity to explore the field of holistic medicine at “SOHAM” – the Society for Holistic Advancement of Medicine, located in New Friends Colony – led by renowned holistic medicine expert, Dr R K Tuli. My intention was to gather insights into the holistic approach to treatment, but what I encountered exceeded my expectations.

As I approached the clinic, I was struck by the sight of a long queue of patients, all waiting for their turn to consult Dr Tuli. This overwhelming response was a testament to the growing recognition and demand for holistic treatments. Driven by curiosity, I decided to interact with some of the patients to understand their experiences better.

One of the individuals I spoke with was Ribbu Gupta, a well-known psychologist who practices in England. She shared her story with me, explaining that she had been suffering from a range of chronic conditions, including back pain, gastric issues, hair fall, skin rashes, and several acute health problems.



Holistic medicine transcends conventional treatment by addressing the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. This integrative approach blends modern science with alternative therapies, offering a path to deeper and more sustainable health outcomes.





“Ever since I started receiving treatment at SOHAM Clinic under Dr Tuli’s guidance, I have experienced a remarkable transformation in my health. I feel rejuvenated, and you could say that the smile has returned to my face,” Ribbu expressed with genuine satisfaction.

Another patient, S K Arora, a 72-year-old retired Executive Engineer from the Irrigation Department, also shared his journey. He had been grappling with severe back pain, which had rendered him almost immobile. Despite consulting specialists and undergoing numerous diagnostic procedures at various super-specialty hospitals, nothing seemed to provide relief. It was only after he turned to the holistic approach at SOHAM Clinic that he began to experience significant improvement. “I feel relaxed and rejuvenated after the treatment,” he said, with a sense of relief in his voice.

These success stories highlight the profound impact of holistic medicine. To truly grasp the effectiveness of this approach, one must delve into the principles and philosophy that underline holistic medicine.

THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF HOLISTIC MEDICINE

Holistic medicine represents one of the most advanced specialties in the medical world today. It seamlessly integrates the best aspects of evidence-based modern medicine with various alternative, drug-free, recognised systems of health. This unique combination offers unparalleled benefits to patients, enabling them to overcome various ailments through harmless, drug-free methods.

One of the most remarkable features of holistic medicine is its reproducibility and affordability. Unlike conventional medical care, holistic medicine is cost-effective and



The holistic approach to medicine emphasises the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit. By treating the entire person, this method seeks to cure the root causes of illness, leading to a renewed sense of well-being and balance.



Across various settings, individuals are experiencing profound changes through holistic medicine. From chronic pain to psychological distress, patient stories highlight the powerful impact of addressing the root causes of illness with a whole-person approach.



addresses diseases at their root cause. It not only cures ailments but also restores positive health and overall wellness.

The guiding principle of holistic medicine can be found in the Vedic concept “Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah,” which translates to “May all beings be happy, may all beings be free from illness.” This ancient wisdom underscores the importance of health as the foundation of a fulfilling life. Whether it is achieving educational success, financial stability, or even spiritual enlightenment (Moksha), good health is paramount.

Holistic medicine, also known as “Sampurn Chikitsa,” is a comprehensive and balanced approach that combines various

drug-free modalities from different systems of medicine. The term “holism” is derived from the Greek word “holos,” meaning “whole.” It emphasises that all parts of a whole are intimately interconnected, and it is a mistake to study or treat them in isolation if we truly want to understand their function and interaction.

THE HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In the context of health, holism means treating the entire person, considering more than just the physical symptoms of disease or injury. It recognises that bodies, minds, spirits, relationships, and the environments we inhabit all converge to shape our health and well-being.

Holistic health practitioners examine various aspects of an individual’s life, including:

The Holistic Approach to Health and Wellness: What are the body’s





needs for nutrition, sleep, exercise, and rejuvenation? What are the underlying causes of physical pain, and how can this pain be alleviated or managed? What preventative measures can be taken to avoid injury, illness, and disease?

•**Mind:** How can the mind be stimulated through curiosity, wonder, and creative expression? What lessons do emotions offer, and how are the mind and spirit interconnected with others and the environment?

•**Spirit:** What practices connect us with a higher power or deeper meaning? How can we nurture our spiritual health through rituals, meditation, prayer, and connections with nature, ancestors, or a divine entity?

•**People:** How do our relationships with others affect our health? How can we strengthen, renew, and repair ties with family, friends, and

community? How can we set healthy boundaries and cultivate meaningful connections?

•**Culture:** What cultural values, traditions, and practices contribute to our well-being? How can we preserve and integrate cultural wisdom into our lives to promote health and longevity?

•**Environment:** How does the environment we live in impact our health? What are the unique features of our surroundings, and how do they affect our well-being? How can we contribute to making our environment healthier and more supportive?

THE HOLISTIC MODEL VS. CONVENTIONAL; MEDICAL SYSTEMS

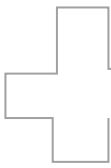
In many parts of the world, including the United States, the medical model is described as patient-centred.

However, in practice, this often translates to a focus on treating symptoms and alleviating pain rather than addressing the broader context of a patient's health. Medical systems are designed to serve large populations efficiently, which sometimes leads to compromised care due to provider shortages and time constraints.

Holistic health, on the other hand, takes a more integrative approach. It brings together teams of care providers, including doctors, mental health professionals, nutritionists, and spiritual healers, to support patients on their journey to better health. By working in harmony with the medical system, holistic health practitioners offer a more comprehensive and personalised approach to patient care.

Many holistic health practitioners are deeply rooted in specific cultural





traditions, such as Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, and indigenous healing practices. These ancient systems, which have been passed down through generations, offer a rich cultural and spiritual connection that goes beyond mere symptom management. They provide patients with a deeper sense of renewal and community.

PURSUING A CAREER IN HOLISTIC HEALTH

Earning a degree in holistic health from an accredited programme equips graduates with the knowledge and skills needed for a long and fulfilling career in this field. There are numerous career paths available to those with a holistic health degree, including:

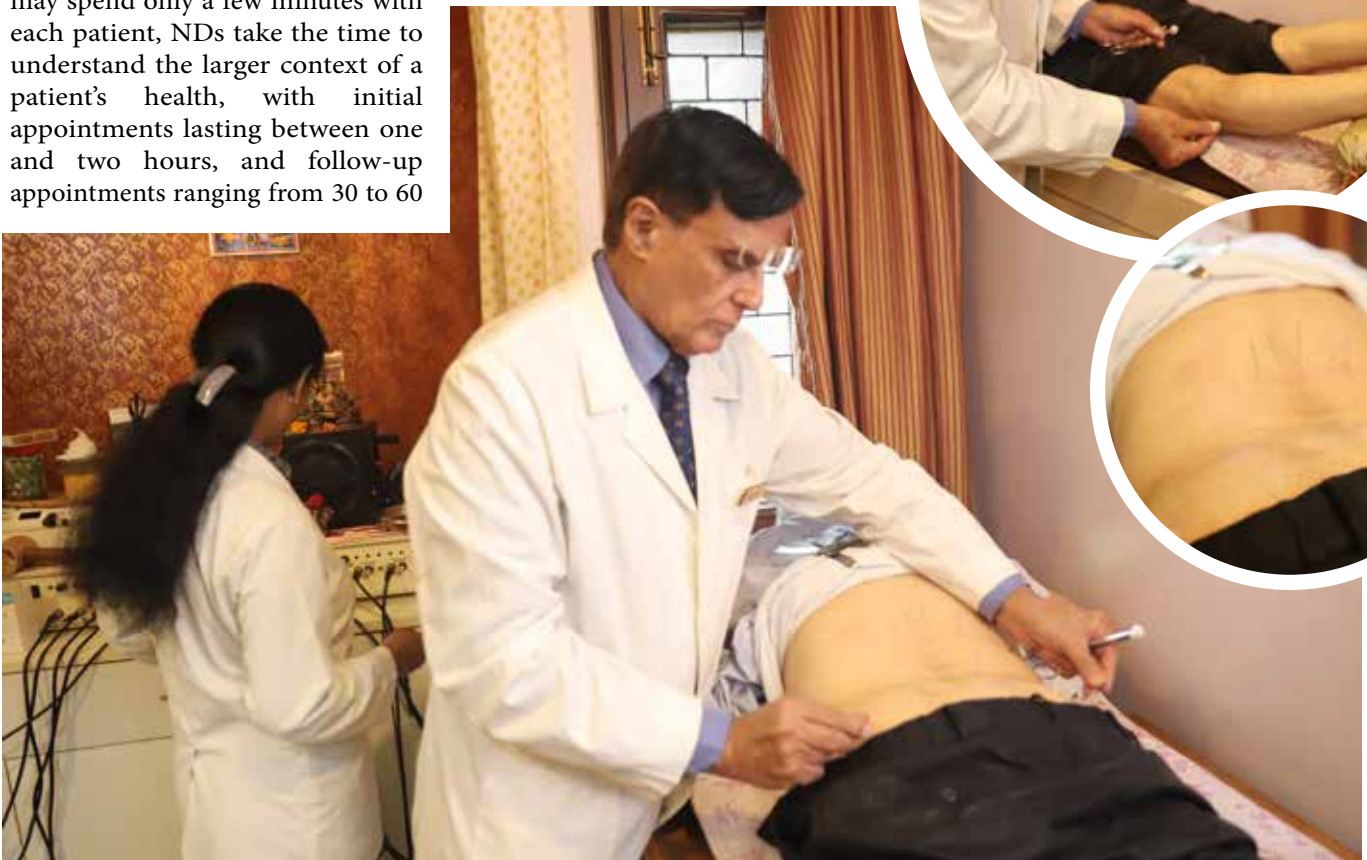
- **Naturopathic Physician:** Naturopathic doctors (NDs) care for patients using a holistic health model. Unlike conventional doctors, who may spend only a few minutes with each patient, NDs take the time to understand the larger context of a patient's health, with initial appointments lasting between one and two hours, and follow-up appointments ranging from 30 to 60



Holistic medicine successfully combines the wisdom of ancient healing traditions with the advancements of modern medical science. This integration provides a balanced and effective solution for those seeking a more comprehensive form of healthcare.

minutes. Accredited naturopathic medical schools require students to complete at least four years of education in biomedical sciences, alongside training in natural approaches to diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

- **Nutritionist:** Holistic health education can provide a solid foundation for a career in nutrition, particularly when combined with an active license. Nutritionists play a vital role in helping individuals, families,





A MOMENTOUS JOURNEY



Dr Ravinder K. Tuli,

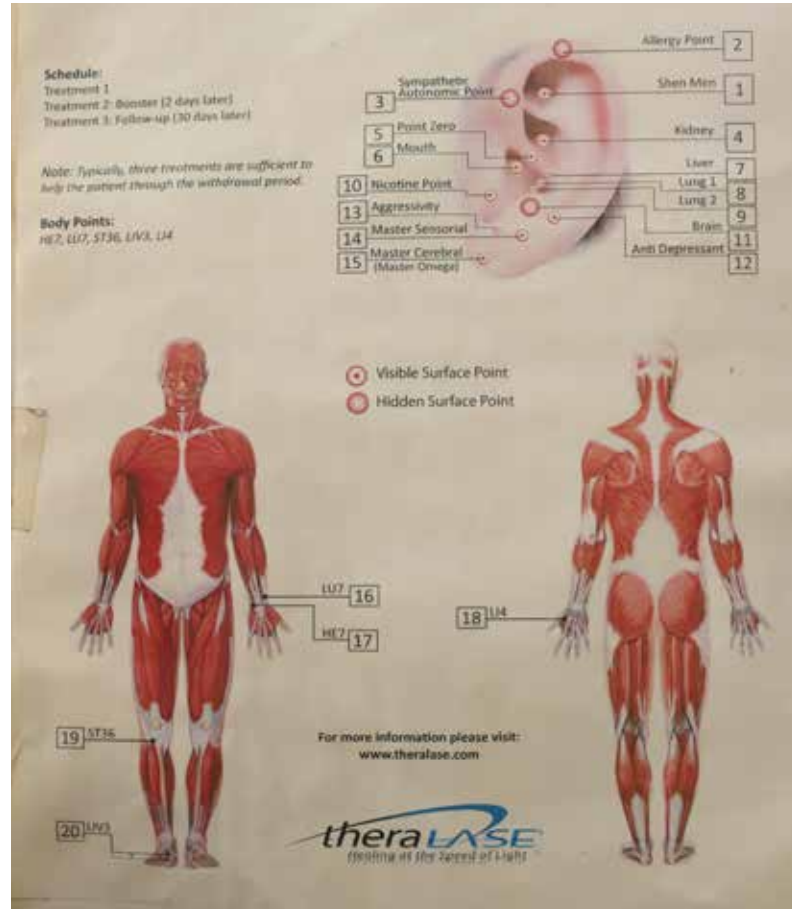
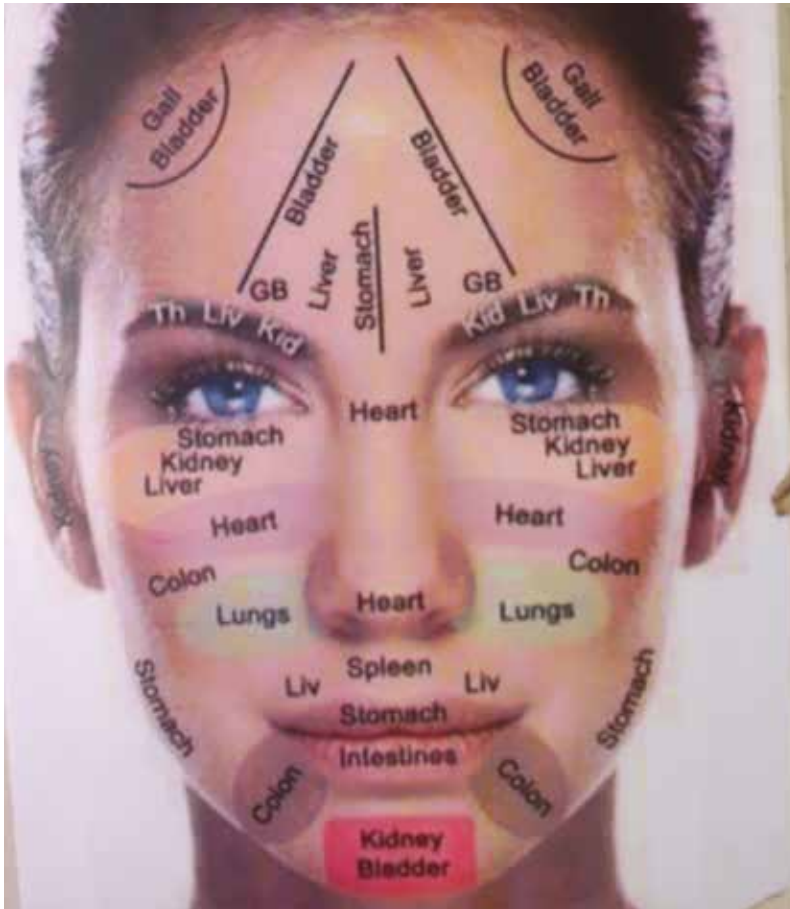
a distinguished 1964 alumnus of the prestigious Armed Forces Medical College in Pune, India, has made significant contributions to the field of medicine throughout his illustrious career. With over 48 years of experience in the medical profession, Dr Tuli has become a pioneer in integrating holistic medicine into mainstream healthcare.

After serving in the Armed Forces Medical Services, specifically the Indian Air Force, Dr Tuli acquired postgraduate qualifications in Aviation, Sports, and General Medicine. His extensive medical background, coupled with a deep understanding of various alternative, drug-free systems of health, led him to establish SOHAM—Society for Holistic Advancement of Medicine. SOHAM stands as a beacon of hope for patients who seek healing beyond conventional medical treatments.

Dr Tuli's approach to holistic medicine is revolutionary in that it treats the human being as a complete entity—

encompassing the body, mind, and spirit. His philosophy is rooted in the belief that true healing requires addressing all aspects of an individual simultaneously. This comprehensive approach is what he refers to as sampuran, santulit, saksham, sampan, and sattvic chikitsa—a balanced, capable, and complete form of treatment.

Patients often come to Dr Tuli, popularly called the “Father of Holistic Medicine”, after exhausting all other medical options. Many of them suffer from chronic pain, psychosomatic disorders, and conditions that conventional medicine has deemed incurable. Through his holistic methods, Dr Tuli has successfully alleviated pain, treated paralysis, and managed various psychological issues ranging from mild anxiety and stress to severe depression and insomnia. His commitment to drug-free treatments ensures that his methods are not only effective but also safe, with no risk of harmful side effects.



communities, and organisations, such as schools, improve their health through nourishing food choices. A background in holistic healthcare is invaluable in this field, given the personal and culturally specific nature of food habits.

•Holistic Health Practitioner: Holistic health draws from a wide array of ancient traditions and contemporary practices, such as acupuncture, chiropractic care, massage therapy, and medical nutrition therapy. By becoming holistic health educators, practitioners can share their knowledge and continue learning about the time-tested theories and practices that contribute to overall well-being.

THE BENEFITS OF HOLISTIC

THERAPY
Holistic therapies offer a wide range of physical and mental benefits. Physically, these therapies help to relieve stress, relax tight muscles, and boost the immune system. Mentally, holistic therapy serves as preventive care for stress management, lifestyle changes, and weight management, including support for weight loss or gain, obesity, and related surgeries. Achieving balance, reducing stress, and fostering a positive outlook on life are key to longevity, improved health, and a lower risk of disease.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND HOLISTIC WELLNESS
According to Dr R K Tuli, spiritual wellness is a critical component of holistic health. The path to spiritual wellness may involve meditation,

prayer, affirmations, or specific spiritual practices that support a connection to a higher power or belief system. Yoga and meditation are also powerful tools for developing spiritual health.
As the World Health Organization (WHO) states in its constitution preamble, adopted in 1946, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition aligns closely with the principles of holistic health, which emphasise the importance of treating the whole person.
Premanand Govind Sharan Ji Maharaj, also known as Premanand Ji Maharaj, an Indian Hindu spiritual guru and philosopher, has also highlighted the connection between spiritualism and holistic treatment.



He observes that “Holistic medicine is a form of healing that considers the whole person – body, mind, spirit, and emotions – in the quest for optimal health and wellness.”

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN HOLISTIC HEALTH

The philosophy of holistic medicine teaches that optimal health can be achieved by maintaining proper balance in life. Spiritual practices enhance coping skills, provide social support, and foster a sense of purpose and meaning, which are essential for overall well-being. In holistic health, spirituality is not confined to religious

practices; it encompasses any practice that connects an individual with their inner self and the larger universe. Spiritual health involves nurturing relationships with others, fostering compassion, and cultivating a sense of gratitude. These practices help individuals manage stress, reduce anxiety, and improve their overall quality of life. By addressing the spiritual aspect of health, holistic medicine offers a more complete approach to healing and wellness. Holistic practitioners encourage their patients to explore different spiritual practices to find what resonates best with them. This could include

meditation, yoga, prayer, journaling, or spending time in nature. The goal is to help individuals connect with their inner selves, develop resilience, and find peace amidst life’s challenges.

TAKEAWAYS


Holistic medicine is a powerful approach to health and wellness that goes beyond treating symptoms to address the underlying causes of illness. By considering the whole person, holistic health practitioners provide a comprehensive and personalised approach to care. This approach not only alleviates physical symptoms but also promotes mental



clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual growth.

As more people seek alternatives to conventional medical treatments, the demand for holistic health practitioners continues to grow. Whether through nutrition, naturopathy, mental health counselling, or spiritual guidance, holistic medicine offers a path to true healing and wellness.

For those considering a career in holistic health, the opportunities are vast and rewarding. By embracing the principles of holistic medicine, practitioners can make a profound impact on the lives of their patients, helping them achieve optimal health and well-being.

As Ribbu Gupta and S K Arora’s stories illustrate, the holistic approach has the power to transform lives. It is a testament to the effectiveness of treating the whole person, rather than just the disease. The journey to holistic health may require dedication and an open mind, but the rewards—physical vitality, mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual fulfilment—are well worth the effort. 



A Whole New Way of Healing



Holistic medicine is emerging as an innovative frontier in healthcare, integrating the strengths of modern and traditional systems to promote longevity and well-being. This transformative method not only addresses physical ailments but also nurtures the mind and spirit, promising a path to total health, reduced dependency on medication, and a high quality of life.

BY DR R K TULI





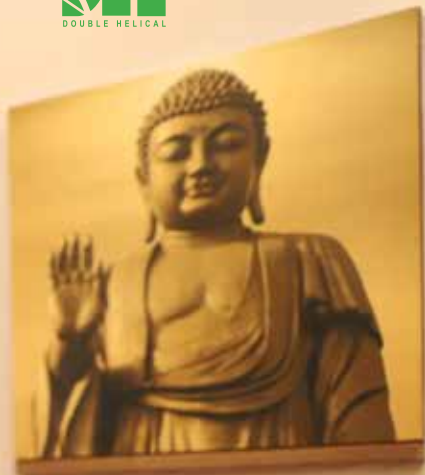
It is an inherent desire within every human being to live a long and fulfilling life. However, the true essence of longevity is not merely in the number of years we live, but in the quality of those years. To live long, one must also strive to live well, maintaining good health, feeling vibrant, looking youthful, being productive, and remaining a valuable contributor to society for as long as possible. This holistic approach to living, often referred to as 'Positive Wellness,' should be attainable at any

age, with minimal or easily manageable disability.

According to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO), the average life expectancy at birth in India has seen significant improvement over the years. In 1990, it stood at 57 years; by 2000, it had risen to 61 years, and by 2009, it further improved to 65 years. This is in contrast to the current global average of 68 years, with Japan leading the world with an impressive average life expectancy of 83 years. If this trend continues, many of us in

India could expect to live a century or more. However, as we gain these additional years, it is imperative that our increasing longevity is supported by enhanced health, reduced dependency on medication, and a high quality of life (QOL).

The increase in lifespan can be attributed to a multitude of factors, including greater affluence, improved living conditions, higher levels of education, increased health awareness, healthier diets, better sanitation and hygiene practices, safer working environments, and



Holistic medicine integrates modern scientific advancements with traditional practices, providing a comprehensive approach to health that addresses the whole person—body, mind, and spirit.

and the natural process of aging.

To address these challenges, it is essential that we incorporate time-tested, drug-free modalities from officially recognised traditional systems of health into our healthcare practices. These modalities have the potential to reverse the effects of aging, prevent, and even cure diseases that are typically associated with the aging process.

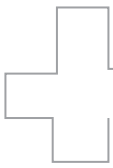
Holistic Medicine, which combines all-inclusive integrative drug-free modalities, is a comprehensive approach to healthcare. It emphasises meaningful lifestyle modifications inspired by the principles of yoga, which include maintaining a peaceful mind, cultivating positive thoughts, ensuring restful sleep, eliminating stress, practicing proper breathing techniques, adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical exercise, undergoing Panchakarma for



significant advancements in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Additionally, the development of better medical facilities has played a crucial role. Yet, alongside these advancements, we must also remain vigilant about the emerging threats to our health and survival, particularly those related to lifestyle disorders, viral infections,

detoxification, and utilising various forms of acupuncture therapy. These practices are often supported by psycho-hypnotherapy, especially in the management of chronic and refractory diseases.

The traditional philosophies of health from both Indian and Chinese cultures view each human being as a microcosm of the larger universal



The integration of drug-free therapies with lifestyle modifications reveals a promising path to slowing and even reversing the effects of aging, enhancing overall well-being.

macrocosm. This perspective recognises that the human body is a magnificently organised network of energy, information, and intelligence that is in constant dynamic exchange with its environment. It possesses an infinite capacity for transformation and renewal, continuously replacing old tissues according to a predetermined cycle. By complementing conventional medical care with an awareness of this natural phenomenon, we can significantly reduce the burden of disease, improve our overall health, and decelerate, arrest, or even reverse the biological clock to an appreciable extent.

Holistic Medicine, which integrates the ancient 'art' of healing with the modern 'science' of medicine, offers a highly effective therapeutic approach. This approach taps into the subtle shifts within our physiology to generate biochemical communicators that influence the molecules comprising our cells, tissues, organs, and entire systems, ultimately treating the human being as a whole. By harnessing the inbuilt natural technology inherent in every individual, we can tap into the



unlimited reservoirs of universal energy, creativity, and vitality. This allows us to arrest and reverse disease processes, minimise the morbidity associated with biological aging, and restore positive health and total wellness. As Hippocrates, the “Father of Medicine,” aptly stated, “The natural healing force within each of us is the greatest force in getting well.”

WHY HOLISTIC MEDICINE?

It is increasingly recognised worldwide that it would be impossible to meet all the healthcare needs of humanity through the conventional model of healthcare alone. The WHO has recommended, and our National Health Policy has promulgated, the integration of all recognised systems of medicine. This integrative approach is not only practical but essential in



Combining ancient wisdom with contemporary techniques, holistic medicine offers a complete and effective method for achieving optimal health and longevity.

addressing the diverse health challenges faced by individuals today.

WHAT IS HOLISTIC MEDICINE?

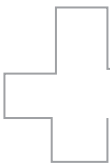
Holistic Medicine is a comprehensive approach to health that treats each individual as a whole, encompassing the ‘Body, Mind & Spirit.’ It represents a synergy between the evidence-based ‘science’ of modern medicine and the highly complementary, reproducible, and time-honoured ‘art’ of drug-free modalities from all officially recognised traditional systems of health.

In essence, Holistic Medicine can be represented by the following equation:

Holistic Medicine = Modern Medicine + Alternative Medicine

(Modern = Allopathy; Alternative = Traditional Indian & Chinese





Medicine + New Age Therapies)

This approach includes a wide range of modalities:

Conservative Medicine + Life-Style & Stress Management + Ashtanga Yoga + Acupuncture-Reflexology-LASER + Panchakarma-Detoxification + Counselling-Hypnotherapy-PLRT-NLP + Reiki-Pranic Healing-Chakra Balancing + Regenerative Medicine

BENEFITS OF HOLISTIC MEDICINE

1. It treats the human being as a whole, addressing body, mind, and soul.
2. It offers a 'synergy' of drug-free modalities from all recognised systems of health.
3. It is equally beneficial at all levels of health and at all ages.
4. It addresses all ailments of an individual concurrently.
5. It is a drug-free, intervention-free approach with no risk of iatrogenesis.
6. It is highly reproducible, universally



Harnessing the body's natural healing abilities through holistic approaches enables significant improvements in health, underscoring the power of self-repair and wellness.

beneficial, and both cost- and time-efficient.
7. It is simple, easily accessible, and can be administered anywhere and

everywhere.

8. It optimises healthcare by complementing existing infrastructure without additional costs.

9. It significantly enhances the skills and professional satisfaction of practitioners, helping to restore the old glory of the medical profession.

UTILITY OF HOLISTIC MEDICINE IN ANTI-AGING

Holistic Medicine has shown remarkable efficacy in treating a wide range of conditions, particularly those associated with aging. These include:

- **Pain:** Treating any kind of pain, including headaches, migraines, neuralgias, neuropathies, fibromyalgia, trauma, phantom pain, gangrene, and more.
- **Paralysis:** Addressing conditions like trauma-induced paralysis, polio, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and



neuropathy.

•**Palliative Care:** Providing compassionate care for incurable or terminal conditions, such as cancer.

•**Stress and Psychosomatic Disorders:** Managing anxiety, depression, chronic fatigue, and other stress-related conditions.

•**Autoimmune Diseases and Allergies:** Treating rheumatoid arthritis, spondylitis, nephritis, SLE, eczema, bronchial asthma, bronchitis, ILD, sarcoidosis, aspergillosis, and more.

•**Degenerative Diseases:** Addressing osteoarthritis, spondylosis, disc disease, macular degeneration, dementia, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and more.

•**Atherosclerosis:** Managing hypertension, coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, post-PTCA or CABG care, gangrene, and more.

•**Metabolic and Hormonal Disorders:** Treating obesity, dyslipidemia, diabetes mellitus, menstrual disturbances, PCOD, infertility, menopause/andropause, and more.

•**Substance Abuse and Addictions:** Helping with tobacco, alcohol, drug abuse, and other substance dependencies.

•**Resistant Infections:** Managing persistent fevers, viral infections, pneumonia, influenza, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, MDR-TB, and more.





TAKEAWAYS

The effectiveness of spiritual power is well illustrated by the ritual of

‘PRAN-PRATISHTHAN’ (प्रण प्रतिष्ठा), where the life-force or

‘वैदिक’ can be infused even into a stone form through spiritual observances. This was vividly demonstrated by the recent invocation of RAM LALLA’s MURTI in Ayodhya amidst Vedic rituals and chanting of mantras, following eleven days of intense observances led by Prime Minister Modi.

When this ‘life-force’ is disturbed or depleted in a person due to the conflicts of modern lifestyles, it often becomes the underlying cause of various chronic or long-term ailments. However, these ailments can be effectively reversed by restoring ‘homoeostasis of the milieu intérieur’ and initiating healing through spiritual practices. This concept is well explained in the Samhitas authored by Maharishis Charaka and Sushruta, as well as in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and is further reinforced by the practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This patient-centric ideology complements conventional medical practices by addressing the root causes of various illnesses, thereby enhancing health and the overall ‘Quality of Life’ of each individual.



Having Got Rid Of My Multiple Incurable Ailments I'M NOW LIVING LIFE IN THE NEXT LEVEL

“I was diagnosed to suffer from **NEUROENDOCRINE TUMOUR**, after initial diagnosis of **Antral Gastritis - Duodenal Ulcer with Rectal Bleeding & H. Pylori** infection. I suffered from tremendous **FEAR**, very high level of **RESTLESSNESS & ANXIETY**, and I was worried for my life. I came to Dr. R. K, Tuli at his “SOHAM” Clinic by some moving reference. Today, after 20 sessions of drug-free Holistic Medicine Therapy, I can say that I am feeling very well and ready to go for anything. Energy level, Patience, Calmness, Equanimity, etc. all have reached to next level. I, also, suffered from Eye Floaters - **MUSCAE VOLITANTES** - disturbing my vision, which too is **CURED** concurrently. My **GRATITUDE** to Dr. Tuli for giving my life.”

HEALTH STATUS (Scale 0-10)

	Fear	Anxiety	Physical	Mental	Spiritual	Eye Floaters
BEFORE	10	10	4	4	10	10
NOW	0	0	10	10	10 ++	1-2

... **YOGESH GUPTA** Member & Zonal Business Head, CARE Health Insurance, Chandigarh




Practice of holistic medicine leads to invigorating the Life-Force of the sick by traditional drug-free modalities, complementing the best practices of modern medicine.

The inherent capability of disease reversal & health restoration of the human needs to be understood & practised a million times more to overcome limitations of conventional care interventions.

In 1996, Dr. Prathap C. Reddy, the Chairman of Apollo Group of Hospitals, invited me to establish the world's first-ever Department of Holistic Medicine at Delhi's premier state-of-the-art multispecialty tertiary care facility, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. He referred to it as the "Medicine of the 21st Century."

The drug-free 'spiritual' practices of traditional systems, without conflict, complement and enhance the efficacy of conventional medical practices at all levels of health and for all ages. These practices are particularly beneficial in reversing conventionally incurable diseases.

Government agencies and society, through corporate social responsibility (CSR), must come forward to support large-scale clinical trials at recognised government institutions to establish the scientific credibility of this all-inclusive and integrative approach to health. 

(The writer is the Founder of the Society for Holistic Advancement of Medicine "SOHAM.")



VISITING "SOHAM" TRANSFORMED MY LIFE



"I'm doing Master's studies in Scotland. I came here to this Clinic during my one month vacation with problem of severe **HAIR FALL** – Loss as well as Thinning of Hair over the past 5 years; I, also, suffered since my childhood from **Digestive Problems**: Constipation, Gas, Belching, Flatulence, Indigestion, and H. Pylori recently; **Nerve Cramps**, Erratic **Late Sleeping**, **Anger**, **Uncontrolled Coughing** & thereby **Poor health**. I was amazed to hear from Dr. Tuli, after he examined me, that all these problems could vanish concurrently in just 20 sessions without any drugs with Holistic Medicine therapy. His words came so true as, now, after almost completing my sessions, I feel a dramatic transformation in my life: A sense of **PEACE** within me, my anger and anxiety has noticeably reduced; lesser hair strands while combing, improved Digestion and the most important change in my life has been the improvement in my Sleeping Schedule. I whole heartedly thank Dr. Tuli and his Staff for transforming my life-long problems within this limited period. I PRAY they keep on spreading this Positivity for Good Health to All.

HEALTH STATUS (Scale 0-10)

	Hair Fall	Physical	Mental	Emotional	Spiritual	Happiness
BEFORE	8	2	4	4	2	4
NOW	0	8	9	9	9	8

Sharing in Public Service & Mission "HEALTH FOR ALL"

"Compliments: "SOHAM" The International Centre For Holistic MediCare: www.holistic-medicare.net



Q&A – Dr R K Tuli

“DOCTORS SHOULD BE TRAINED NOT JUST TO TREAT ILLNESS BUT TO IMPART HEALTH”

In an exclusive conversation with Double Helical, Dr R K Tuli, a pioneer in Holistic Medicine, emphasises the need to combine modern medicine with traditional practices, advocating for a balanced approach that addresses not just the body, but the mind and spirit as well. His insights offer a comprehensive view of how holistic care and right lifestyle choices can prevent, manage, and even reverse chronic illnesses, while promoting positive health and longevity. According to Dr Tuli, the greatest force in getting well lies within each of us. By tapping into our natural healing potential, holistic medicine offers a path to true wellness. Excerpts from the interview...

BY ABHIGYAN

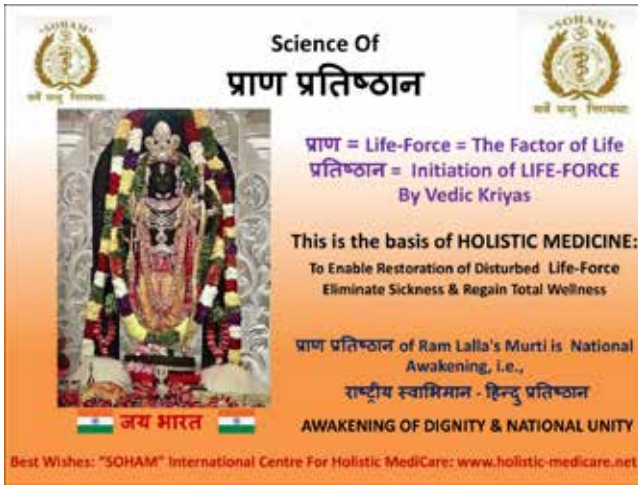
WHY DO YOU FOCUS ON INTEGRATIVE HEALING?

Every system of medicine has its strengths, but none is flawless. With the breakdown of the family system and the shifts in our lifestyle, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like anxiety, depression, insomnia, diabetes, hypertension, coronary artery disease, autoimmune disorders, allergies, hormonal imbalances, infertility issues, cancer, and substance abuse have become prevalent. The majority of healthcare costs and suffering occur in the final years of life, often exhausting an individual's entire savings. It's crucial to integrate the strengths of various medical systems to overcome their inherent deficiencies. NCDs can be prevented, managed, and even cured by following the principles of Maharishi Charaka and Maharishi Patanjali. Medical authorities must recognise that a human being is not merely a collection of body parts, but a complex interplay of body, mind, senses, and soul. Holistic Medicine, through the optimal integration of all health systems, can improve health at any stage, reversing diseases with the principle of “Earlier the Better.”

WHICH MODALITIES DO YOU COMBINE WHILE TREATING PATIENTS? WHICH IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE MODALITY IN CURING PEOPLE COMPLETELY ACCORDING TO YOU?

No single system of medicine is sufficient to address all types of illnesses. Additionally, no two drug-based systems should be used simultaneously due to the risk of drug interactions. People often neglect their health until faced with a serious illness or emergency, at which point they turn to allopathy, the most advanced and scientifically validated system for life-saving interventions. However, ongoing medical management should be complemented with drug-free modalities from traditional Indian and Chinese wisdom, alongside modern health advancements—this synergy is what we call Holistic Medicine.

I practice and advocate for Holistic Medicare, which includes lifestyle management, Ashtanga Yoga, Panchakarma, acupuncture, and hypnotherapy. I view New-Age healing techniques like reiki, pranic healing, and chakra balancing as extensions of Yoga. By treating the person as

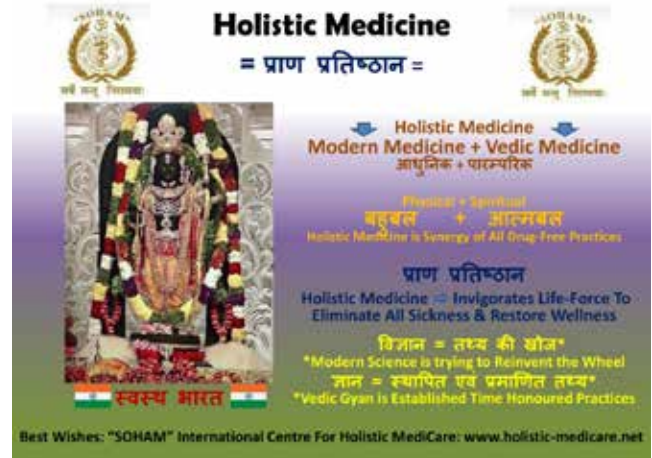
Science Of प्राण प्रतिष्ठान

प्राण = Life-Force = The Factor of Life
 प्राण प्रतिष्ठान = Initiation of LIFE-FORCE
 By Vedic Kriyas

This is the basis of HOLISTIC MEDICINE:
 To Enable Restoration of Disturbed Life-Force
 Eliminate Sickness & Regain Total Wellness

प्राण प्रतिष्ठान of Ram Lalla's Murti is National
 Awakening, i.e.,
 राष्ट्रीय स्वामिमान - हिन्दु प्रतिष्ठान
जय भारत
 AWAKENING OF DIGNITY & NATIONAL UNITY

Best Wishes: "SOHAM" International Centre For Holistic MediCare: www.holistic-medicare.net



Holistic Medicine = प्राण प्रतिष्ठान =

Holistic Medicine
 Modern Medicine + Vedic Medicine
 आधुनिक + पारम्परिक

Physical + Spiritual
 बहुरंग + आत्मबल
 Holistic Medicine is Synergy of All Drug-Free Practices

प्राण प्रतिष्ठान
 Holistic Medicine :- Invigorates Life-Force To
 Eliminate All Sickness & Restore Wellness

विज्ञान = तन्त्र की खोज*
 *Modern Science is trying to Reinvent the Wheel
 ज्ञान = स्थापित एवं प्रमाणित तन्त्र*
 *Vedic Gyan is Established Time Honoured Practices

स्वस्थ भारत

Best Wishes: "SOHAM" International Centre For Holistic MediCare: www.holistic-medicare.net

a whole, rather than focusing on individual ailments, all diseases can be cured concurrently, as evidenced by testimonials in Life Positive magazine for over 22 years.

The accompanying image illustrates that white light, the source of life, embodies physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Just as white light is composed of seven rainbow colours, allopathy, represented by the colour red, forms the backbone of healthcare. However, achieving positive health and total wellness—encompassing Body, Mind & Spirit—requires the integration of all medical systems.

Holistic Medicine = Modern + Traditional Medicine (Traditional = Indian & Chinese)

DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO REVERSE AGING AND STAY YOUNG FOR AS LONG AS YOU WANT? IF YES, HOW?

Yes, in a willing individual, it is entirely possible to reverse the physical effects of aging by restoring balance between mind and body while nurturing the spirit. It is universally acknowledged that “You are as old as you think,” with age being more of a mental state than a physical one. Our Yogis, who have mastered the harmony of Body-Mind-Spirit, serve as living examples of this truth. They live in a state of bliss, transitioning to a healthy departure rather than the typical experience of death.

The “science” of evidence-based modern medicine, when complemented with the “art” of time-honoured traditional health wisdom, forms Holistic Medicine. This approach, which is a board-certified specialty in the United States and is gaining recognition worldwide, represents the future of healthcare. It offers an accessible, predictable, sustainable, and cost-effective approach to maintaining health, keeping people productive and youthful.


Aging begins at birth, but it is possible to remain youthful by educating the youth on the long-term benefits of a simple Vedic or Gurukul lifestyle, including dietary habits, as part

of the national education system. Expanding the SKILL INDIA programme to include Yoga, Panchakarma, and Acupuncture will enhance the effectiveness of primary healthcare workers and doctors. These professionals should be trained not just to treat illness but to impart health. Holistic Medicine as a specialty must flourish, with practitioners available at every tertiary care hospital to complement conventional medical care, enhancing its effectiveness. After a life-saving intervention, instead of increasing medication and creating lifelong dependence on the hospital system, patients should be guided toward prevention and a return to positive health.

With minimal assistance, individuals can reverse illness and restore health by tapping into their self-healing potential. We must raise awareness of the immense capacity for self-healing, a natural intelligence within each of us, to prevent or overcome any sickness. Let the world understand that no antibiotic can help without your immune system, and no surgery can succeed without the patient’s ability to heal their own wounds.

Nature has only one path—its own order. Disrupt this, and you invite disease. One can live a life of bliss and youth by following Patanjali’s sutras.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL TREATMENT IN THE WORLD?

I often recall the prophetic words of Dr Prathap C. Reddy, founder and Chairman of the Apollo Group of Hospitals, who said in 1995 that Holistic Medicine is the future of the 21st century. This inspired me to establish the world’s first department of its kind at Apollo Hospitals, Delhi. Figures like Dr Deepak Chopra have gained global recognition by promoting this concept. Holistic Medicine, by integrating the best of modern and traditional practices, is poised to become the dominant healthcare approach in the years to come. 



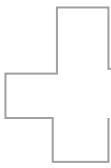


BAND-AID FOR DEEP WOUNDS

The health budget for 2024–2025, when assessed against the background of India's decaying public health infrastructure over the past seven decades, turns out to be grossly inadequate. The growing influence of market forces, driven by the flawed American model of medical consumerism that benefits the pharmaceutical and medical device industries, has led to the proliferation of glitzy, five-star tertiary care corporate hospitals in urban areas. Meanwhile, access to essential primary and secondary health services remains severely compromised.

BY DR AMITAV BANERJEE





The debate surrounding the health budget has become an annual ritual, typically revolving around monetary allocations under various heads. The result of these annual exercises often culminates in blaming the lack of funds for the country's dismal health indicators.

However, more important than the allocation of funds is the discussion on how we utilise our limited resources to meet the health needs of our large population. Public health priorities are unique to each country and cannot be simply adopted from another or dictated by well-meaning international donors who may be unaware of our specific health needs.

Health economics is less about money and more about the judicious allocation of resources, considering the needs and value judgments that often elude quantification in monetary terms. Non-monetary inputs and the decisions based on them can have a more significant impact on the overall health of the population than the total financial outlay in the health budget. There are countries with substantial financial allocations for health, but the outcomes in terms of population health are not commensurate with the money spent.

The USA serves as a case in point. Despite spending more on healthcare than any other nation, Americans remain dissatisfied with their healthcare system. The USA allocates around 15 per cent of its GDP to health, compared to 11 per cent in France and Germany, 10 per cent in Canada, and 8 per cent in the UK and Japan. Most countries in Asia and Africa spend far less, typically around or under 5 per cent of their GDP.

The USA's experience, characterised by high spending but low efficiency in terms of health outcomes, should serve as a cautionary tale for other



The government initiatives like the National Health Mission (NHM) and Ayushman Bharat Program (ABP), though well-intentioned, are inadequately funded and poorly implemented. These programmes, while covering a wide breadth of healthcare needs, lack the depth necessary to truly address the systemic issues plaguing India's public health system.





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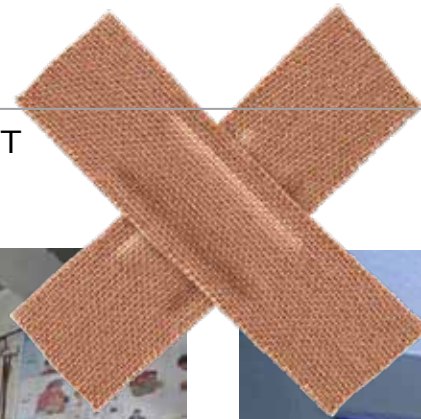
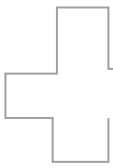
Even after 77 years of Independence, India ranks 111th out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index. It ranks among the countries with the highest rates of child malnutrition and anaemia. An estimated 4,500 children under five die daily in India from preventable diseases, exacerbated by malnutrition.

countries. Money not used wisely, based on a country's public health priorities, is money wasted.

Several factors contribute to the inefficiency of the US model of health budgeting, particularly the increased consumerism in health driven by market forces—something other countries should heed. Market forces in the US have driven Americans to consume excessive amounts of costly medical care of uncertain benefit. This demand has led to allocation inefficiency, where the incremental money spent in the health budget did not translate into proportional benefits. Advances in medical technology, often overhyped by market forces, have skewed healthcare towards tertiary levels, neglecting primary and secondary care. Medical treatment at the tertiary level is becoming more complex in an attempt to achieve perfection with zero error expectations, leading to increased litigation and eroding trust between patients and doctors. Defensive medicine, involving a battery of often irrelevant investigations to protect against possible litigation, has further escalated the cost of medical care and contributed to allocation inefficiency.

Various stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical and other industries, have entered the fray, seeking returns on their significant investments in R&D. The medical-pharmaceutical industry has transformed healthcare into a monolith with vast resources but poor vision. As a result, primary and secondary care has been neglected in favour of investments in tertiary care. Unhealthy diets and the neglect of physical activity are driving increasing levels of obesity and comorbidities of non-communicable diseases, which, in turn, lead to a demand for tertiary-level healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of a healthy lifestyle, not only for the





India accounts for a quarter of the global burden of tuberculosis (TB), with over 1,400 Indians dying daily from the disease. Dengue, Chikungunya, Zika, Japanese Encephalitis, malaria, and other vector-borne diseases are rampant in the country. It is embarrassing that we have not yet reached the level of health that developed countries had achieved before the start of the Second World War.

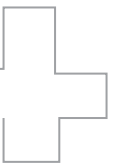
prevention of and reduced morbidity and mortality from non-communicable diseases but also for ensuring that good population-level health can cushion the effects of pandemics. Western countries, including the USA, where overweight rates are two to three times higher than in Asian and African countries, experienced 10 to 20 times higher death rates from COVID-19, despite

far higher vaccination rates (most African countries had less than 5 per cent vaccination coverage but did not face the same pandemic severity).

LESSONS FOR INDIA FROM THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

There are crucial lessons from the American experience that India can ill afford to ignore. While India began with a sound roadmap for health

based on the country's health problems and priorities, we seem to have lost our way over the years. Increasingly, we are following the American model, dominated by specialists and sub-specialists, pushing first-contact general practitioners into the background, if not into oblivion. Like in the USA, market forces are increasingly influencing our health policies. This can limit the vision for an objective analysis of our health priorities, which may become skewed towards off-the-shelf priorities from other regions or the dictates of the market, resulting in allocation inefficiency. Regardless of how large our health budget is, inappropriate allocations will not improve the health of our population. Unfortunately, these dynamics are already at play. A brief



summary of our health vision since Independence and how we have strayed from it will help us understand the nuances.

India began with a sound roadmap for health. Around the time of Independence, the Health Survey and Development Committee, known as the Bhore Committee, outlined India's public health priorities and made its recommendations accordingly. The Bhore Committee report is vast in its scope and vision, but over the years since Independence, its vision seems to have dimmed.

The Bhore Committee highlighted the poor state of health in India, noting high infant mortality rates (IMR) and short life expectancy. It attributed these issues to unsanitary conditions, inadequate public health infrastructure, poor nutrition, and a

lack of general and health education. The Committee stressed the need for a frontal attack on these factors and emphasised the importance of maintaining public awareness and momentum in the fight against disease. It also highlighted the enormous economic losses the country faces due to malnutrition and preventable morbidity and mortality, a value judgment often missing from appraisals of the annual health budget.

In its recommendations, the Committee stated that health services should be an integral part of an overall plan for national reconstruction. Addressing health problems by focusing on a single aspect in isolation, as is the current practice, would only lead to disappointment and a waste of money

and effort. The Bhore Committee envisioned a primary health unit for every 10,000 to 20,000 people, with a 75-bed hospital staffed by six medical officers, including specialists in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology, supported by other auxiliary staff. About 30 primary units were to be overseen by a secondary unit with a 650-bed hospital offering all major specialties. At the district level, it recommended a 2,500-bed hospital providing primarily tertiary care.

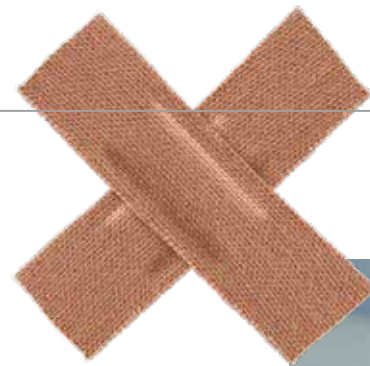
Even after 77 years of Independence, despite achieving the status of the world's 5th largest economy and having 200 Indians on the Forbes 2024 billionaires list, India ranks 111th out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index. It ranks among the countries with the highest rates of child malnutrition and anaemia. An estimated 4,500 children under five die daily in India from preventable diseases, exacerbated by malnutrition.

Among communicable diseases, India accounts for a quarter of the global burden of tuberculosis (TB), with over 1,400 Indians dying daily from the disease. Dengue, Chikungunya, Zika, Japanese Encephalitis, malaria, and other vector-borne diseases are rampant in the country. It is embarrassing that we have not yet reached the level of health that developed countries had achieved before the start of the Second World War.

HOW DID WE STRAY FROM THE PATH LAID OUT BY THE BHORE COMMITTEE?

Former Professor at AIIMS New Delhi, Dr Bidhu K Mohanti, an oncologist, states that the Indian healthcare system has passed through three stages: 1952-1980; 1981-1992; and 1993 to the present.

In the first 30 years after Independence, in line with the Bhore Committee Report, health services,



in addition to private general practitioners, were mostly provided by salaried government doctors within a three-tiered public health infrastructure at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The primary and secondary levels of healthcare at the village, taluk, and district levels were designed to treat the majority of diseases and also provide preventive and health promotion services free of cost.

The next decade saw the gradual decay of the public health infrastructure due to the overall economic collapse. Government spending on medical education, which had previously been its sole responsibility, stagnated. Several private medical colleges were established in the 1980s, beginning with the southern states, after which there was no looking back. Currently, half of the medical colleges in the country are private. Similarly, public hospitals faced a resource crunch, and to cope, a number of public-private partnerships evolved.

BIG TECTONIC SHIFT AFTER 1992

There was a paradigm shift in the economic model after 1992, triggering enormous changes in the health financing system that have spilled over into the 21st century—a complex, hybrid model of healthcare delivery with no clear vision and increasing influence of market forces. The emphasis that the Bhole Committee Report placed on the neglected aspects of public health, which have led to large amounts of preventable morbidity, has become the underbelly of our shining reputation as the favoured country for medical tourism, due to our five-star tertiary care corporate hospitals offering state-of-the-art medical treatment.

Market forces, a necessary evil in an era of massive technological investments in R&D for drug



The HPV vaccine’s rollout should be approached with caution , given the vaccine’s doubtful efficacy and cost-effectiveness, particularly in the context of India’s healthcare priorities. Previous vaccine trials in India, sponsored by the Gates Foundation and conducted by PATH, encountered ethical issues, including deaths during the trials. An investigation by the 72nd Joint Parliamentary Committee revealed irregularities and questioned the ICMR’s promotion of the vaccine without proper study.

discovery and medical devices, have transformed medicine into an industry. In chasing the glitz and glamour of the high-tech medical industry, we have strayed faster and further from the roadmap of the Bhole Committee, which had envisaged: (a) a hospital with 75 beds for every 10,000 to 20,000 people as a primary health unit at the rural level, (b) a 650-bed secondary multi-specialty hospital at the taluk or sub-division level, and (c) a 2,500-bed tertiary-level hospital in each district.

In post-1992 economically liberated India, with its emphasis on GDP growth and increasing privatisation of health services, there

has been a failure to allocate adequate resources to meet the demands for a robust public health infrastructure. In this vacuum, private entrepreneurs have thrived. More than 60 per cent of outpatient attendance, 70 per cent of hospital beds, and 80 per cent of doctors are now in the private sector. Medical and nursing education, which lays the foundation of the healthcare system, has witnessed increasing private investment with government approvals. It is debatable whether these developments can someday meet the healthcare needs of the country, particularly for the poor and marginalised.

From time to time, the government





does make attempts to address the long-neglected public health infrastructure, which is accessible to the less privileged who cannot afford private healthcare. The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched in 2005 was the forerunner of the more ambitious National Health Mission (NHM), which has two components: the NRHM and the National Urban Health Mission (NUHM). While these programs were well planned, their execution has been a challenge. The recent budget also has given stepmotherly treatment to the NHM.

Another attempt to offer affordable health services to the poor was the

Ayushman Bharat Programme (ABP) launched in 2017 and included in the health budget of 2018-19. The ABP had two components: first, the delivery of comprehensive primary-level healthcare by upgrading 150,000 health Sub-Centres (SC) and Primary Health Centres (PHC) to Health and Wellness Centres (HWC) by the year 2022, and secondly, providing secondary and tertiary-level medical care under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY). It was claimed that PMJAY is the world's largest health programme. Paradoxically, no significant financial provisions were made to beef up the ailing public health infrastructure in

the country.

The Finance Ministry allocated Rs 1,200 crore for the health and wellness centres in 2018-19, which translates to Rs 80,000 per centre. Essentially, it was just a thin coat of paint for the old primary healthcare centres, which were renamed for the occasion. The budget allocation for PMJAY at its launch in 2018-19 was Rs 2,000 crore, which was twice the previous year's budget for the Rashtriya Swastha Bima Yojana, PMJAY's predecessor, which was absorbed into the PMJAY.

Essentially, both components of the Ayushman Bharat Program—the HWCs and the PMJAY—amounted



to shuffling the same deck of cards, only with a shiny new cover. Both these schemes covered breadth but lacked depth.

HEALTH BUDGET 2024-2025: FALLING SHORT OF MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

The health budget for 2024–2025, when appraised against the background of our decaying public health infrastructure over the past seven decades, seems like a misplaced band-aid over the deep wounds our public health system has suffered over the years.

The budget has allocated Rs 90,958.63 crore to the Union Health Ministry, a 12.9 per cent increase from Rs 80,517.62 crore in the revised estimates for the Health Ministry in 2023–24. Of this, Rs 87,656.90 crore has been allocated to the Department of Health and Family Welfare and Rs 3,301.73 crore for health research. The budget for AIIMS New Delhi has been increased marginally from Rs 4,273 crore to Rs 4,523 crore.

The government has also announced customs duty exemptions on three cancer treatment drugs and has reduced customs duty on X-ray tubes and flat panel detectors.

The marginal extra allocations may appear to signal a slow but steady focus on our health, but they hide the truth that these allocations fall woefully short considering the enormity of the country's health challenges and the unfulfilled promise of the Bhole Committee Report, which was tabled around the time we had our "tryst with destiny," as our first Prime Minister famously coined it.

STRAYING FROM THE BHOLE COMMITTEE'S PATH

A paradigm shift in the economic model after 1992 triggered enormous changes in the health financing

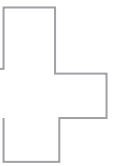


system, resulting in a complex, hybrid model of healthcare delivery with no clear vision and increasing influence from market forces. The Bhole Committee Report, which emphasised neglected aspects of public health and aimed to address preventable morbidity, has been overshadowed by India's reputation as a favoured destination for medical tourism, featuring high-end tertiary care corporate hospitals offering state-of-the-art treatment.

The Health Budget for 2024-2025, when assessed against the backdrop of a deteriorating public health infrastructure over the past seven

decades, seems like a misplaced band-aid over deep wounds. The budget has allocated Rs 90,958.63 crore to the Union Health Ministry, a 12.9% increase from Rs 80,517.62 crore in 2023-24. Of this, Rs 87,656.90 crore is for the health and family welfare department and Rs 3,301.73 crore for health research. The budget for AIIMS New Delhi has increased marginally from Rs 4,273 crore to Rs 4,523 crore.

Criticisms of the budget, however, can also miss the mark. For instance, concerns about the lack of incentives for industry to bring private healthcare closer to common Indians



Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for girls. However, this proposal highlights how health policymakers, influenced by market forces and celebrity endorsements, are distanced from ground realities.

The HPV vaccine's rollout should be approached with caution. Previous vaccine trials in India, sponsored by the Gates Foundation and conducted by PATH, encountered ethical issues, including deaths during the trials. An investigation by the 72nd Joint Parliamentary Committee revealed irregularities and questioned the ICMR's promotion of the vaccine without proper study. Despite this, policymakers continue to promote the HPV vaccine, driven more by propaganda than scientific evidence.


Furthermore, a recent paper in the Journal of the Royal Society questioned the vaccine's efficacy, noting that trials were not designed to detect long-term cancer prevention, and follow-ups were limited. Another paper published in BMC Cancer indicated a significant decline in cervical cancer incidence and deaths in India over the past three decades.

If policymakers and philanthropists genuinely aim to prevent cervical cancer deaths, they should focus on making hospital services more widely available as envisioned by the Bhore Committee. This approach,

emphasising cervical cancer screening rather than the uncertain HPV vaccine, would be more effective. An analysis from Australia suggested that the HPV vaccine is not cost-effective in settings with established cervical screening.

The NHM, a weak attempt to improve health services for the vulnerable, received just a 1.16% increase in funding, including the ill-conceived HPV vaccination programme. The path forward requires many steps backward—expanding public health infrastructure across the country. The increasing number of high-rise hospitals in big cities indicates that course correction has not yet begun.

Private players are crucial in the health sector, but excessive reliance on them, with their inherent conflicts of interest, will further neglect public health hospitals and centres. Our health planners appear influenced by the flawed American health model of medical consumerism, benefiting the pharmaceutical and medical device industries. A balanced approach, focusing on primary and secondary healthcare, is needed to prevent people from ending up in costly tertiary hospitals.

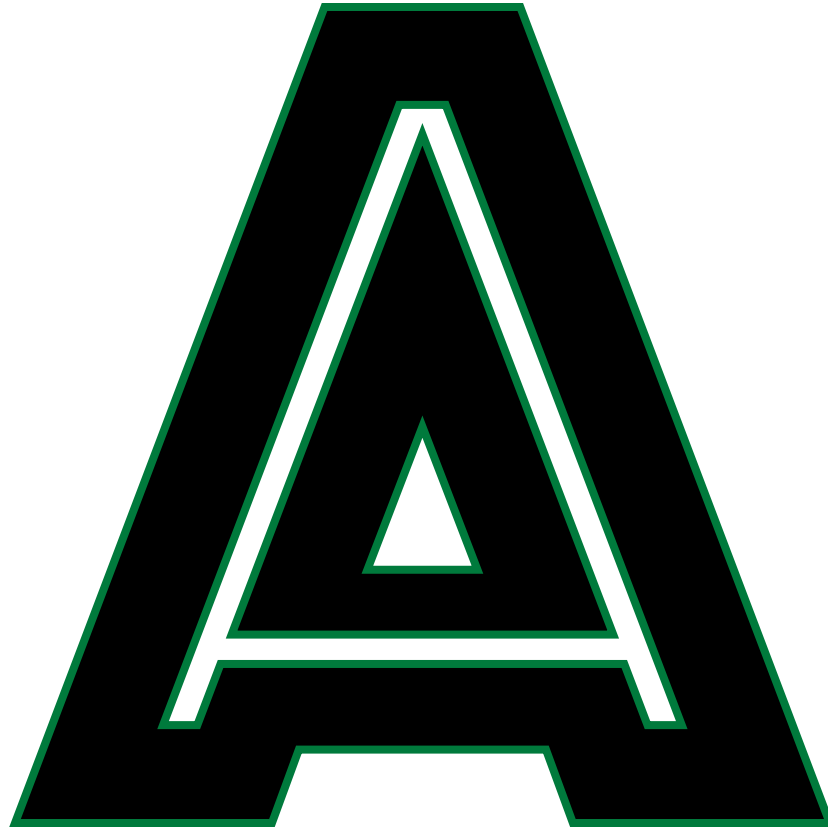
Ultimately, we must revisit and implement the Bhore Committee's recommendations. This task is neither glamorous nor lucrative compared to promoting medical tourism, high-rise hospitals, and pharmaceutical products. Until then, annual Health Budget debates will remain futile exercises with minimal impact on public health, despite increased budgets. Effective planning based on scientific evidence and the needs of the people is more crucial than simply increasing funding. 

(The author is a renowned epidemiologist and currently a Professor Emeritus at DY Patil Medical College, Pune.

overlook the absence of private hospitals in rural areas where most of the population resides. There are no shortcuts to establishing public hospitals in rural areas, which would require substantial investments to rectify years of neglect.

Another criticism is the failure of the NHM to roll out a nationwide cervical cancer vaccination programme as announced in the interim budget. This critique is misplaced, reflecting an amateurish approach to public health priorities. Even Rajya Sabha Member Smt Sudha Murthy, in her maiden speech, urged the government to launch the Human





The Union health budget, though increased by 12.9%, has disappointed the medical fraternity. Experts argue that the modest 1.7% rise from last year fails to address the pressing challenges in the healthcare sector, leaving critical areas like mental health, senior care, and preventive wellness largely ignored.

BY ABHIGYAN

PRESCRIPTION

FOR DISCONTENT

COVER STORY - HEALTH BUDGET

The Union government for 2024-2025 has allocated ₹90,958.63 crore to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, marking a 12.9% increase from the previous year's revised estimate of ₹80,517.62 crore. Despite this increase, the allocation has left the medical fraternity disillusioned. Experts have pointed out that this budgetary enhancement, when closely examined, translates to a mere 1.7% rise in the overall health budget from the previous financial year, 2024. Furthermore, the budget lacks any substantial new initiatives or announcements that would address the pressing challenges facing the healthcare sector.

One of the few specific measures introduced in the budget is the exemption of customs duty on three cancer treatment drugs: Trastuzumab Deruxtecan, Osimertinib, and Durvalumab. This step, while welcome, appears inadequate in the face of the growing cancer crisis in



India. In 2022 alone, India reported over 14.13 lakh new cancer cases and saw a staggering 9.16 lakh deaths attributed to the disease. The exemption, though beneficial, does not address the broader need for a comprehensive cancer care strategy that could encompass prevention, early detection, and treatment across the country.

The budget also introduced reductions in customs duty rates on X-ray tubes and flat panel detectors, which, while useful for medical imaging, again seem like a piecemeal



Despite the alarming rise in mental health disorders, the budget's allocation to the National Tele Mental Health Programme sees only a modest increase. Experts warn that the current funding levels are inadequate to bridge the significant treatment gap, which ranges from 70% to 92% across various mental health conditions.

approach in the absence of a holistic plan to strengthen healthcare infrastructure.

The Economic Survey 2024, tabled in Parliament on July 22, highlighted two critical health concerns: the alarming rise in obesity and the burgeoning mental health crisis. The survey drew a direct correlation between the increasing prevalence of obesity in India and the consumption of processed foods, sugars, and unhealthy fats. It underscored the necessity for a national shift towards a healthier lifestyle, emphasising that

such a transition is vital for India to fully capitalise on its demographic dividend.

The survey also noted that the surge in the consumption of highly processed, sugar-laden foods, combined with declining physical activity and limited access to diverse and nutritious foods, has exacerbated both micronutrient deficiencies and obesity rates. Alarming, the percentage of men aged 18-69 who are classified as obese has increased from 18.9% in NFHS-4 (National Family Health Survey) to 22.9% in

NFHS-5. For women in the same age bracket, the figures have risen from 20.6% to 24%, signalling a significant public health challenge.

Mental health, another area of concern, was also given considerable attention in the Economic Survey, which described it as being “intertwined with all aspects of health, namely physical, social, and emotional.” Despite this recognition, the budget's response appears limited. The allocation for the National Tele Mental Health Programme was increased from ₹65 crore to ₹90



crore—a positive step, but one that falls short of the scale required to address the widespread mental health issues in the country. The National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 revealed that 10.6% of Indian adults suffer from mental health disorders, with treatment gaps ranging between 70% and 92% across different conditions. This stark reality necessitates a far more robust financial and policy commitment than what the current budget offers.

and wellness, which has been almost entirely overlooked—an oversight that is deeply discouraging.”

Dr Thomas further noted the absence of provisions for senior citizens, expressing concern over their exclusion from the budget. “Though we remain hopeful that our advocacy will prompt reconsideration, especially regarding GST aspects, overall, this budget fails to adequately address the critical needs of the health sector. It is vital for policymakers to

a letter addressed to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the IMA expressed concern over the government’s low spending on health. Under various administrations, health allocation has ranged from 1.1% to 1.6% of GDP, placing India among the lowest in the world. This budget does little to change that.”

Thus, the modest rise in allocation for healthcare does little to meet the escalating demands posed by an aging population, a growing mental health




Dr A K Aggarwal, Medical Advisor for Innovation and Clinical Research at Apollo Group of Hospitals, New Delhi, expressed concern over the rising impact of internet usage on mental health. He cited a 2021 study by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, which found that 23.8% of children use smartphones while in bed, and 37.2% experience reduced levels of concentration due to smartphone use. This highlights the growing need for targeted mental health interventions, particularly for the younger population.

Reflecting on the budget, **Dr Alexander Thomas, President of the Association of Healthcare Providers India (AHPI)**, described it as a disappointing outcome for the healthcare sector. “Many of our expectations were not met, despite AHPI being specifically invited to the pre-budget meeting,” he said. “We had hoped for a positive shift, particularly in the area of prevention

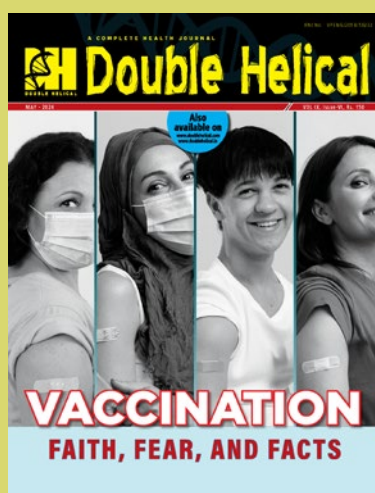
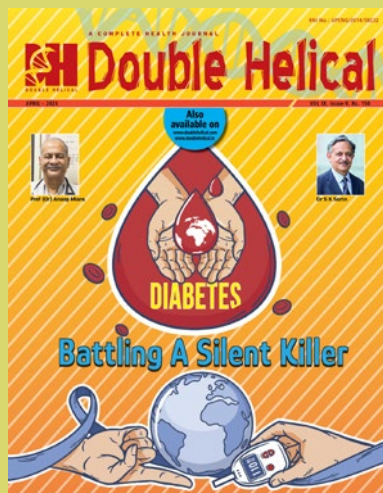


understand that good healthcare leads to a productive and progressive nation. We must continue to advocate for the healthcare priorities that will uplift our society as a whole.”

Dr Vinay Aggarwal, Past National President of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), echoed these sentiments, stating, “We have long demanded an increased allocation of financial resources in the Union health budget, advocating for a tax-based system of health financing. In

crisis, and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases like cancer and obesity. The lack of substantial provisions for preventive healthcare, senior citizen care, and a more comprehensive mental health framework reflects a budget that is reactive rather than proactive. To build a truly resilient healthcare system, policymakers must go beyond incremental changes and embrace a bold vision that prioritises health as the foundation of national progress. 

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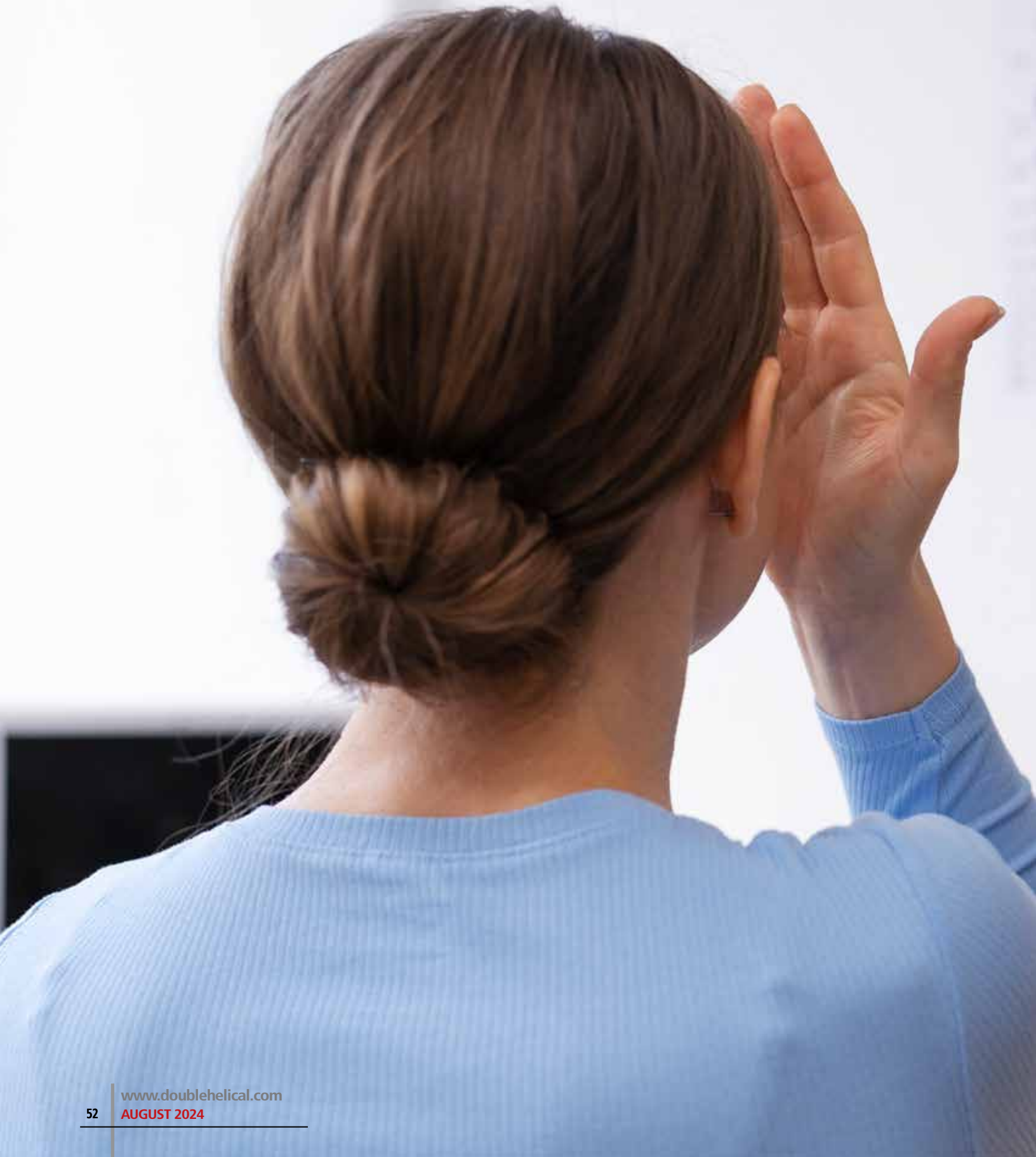
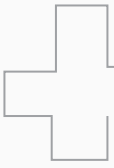
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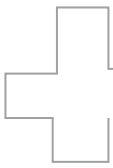
Don't

Underestimate Your

Cataract

Cataracts are more than just a common eye issue; they can significantly disrupt your daily life. Often evolving gradually, cataracts can transform clear vision into a blurred and hazy experience, impacting everything from reading to driving.

BY DR RAJESH RANJAN



Cataracts are often dismissed as a minor inconvenience, but their impact on vision and daily life can be profound. While they are commonly associated with aging, cataracts can develop at any stage of life and significantly impair your vision if left untreated. Understanding the nature of cataracts, their symptoms, and the importance of timely intervention is crucial for maintaining clear and functional vision.

Cataracts are a significant eye condition characterized by the clouding of the natural lens of the eye. This lens, which is normally clear, becomes opaque, leading to various visual disturbances. If you experience symptoms such as blurred vision, difficulty seeing at night, a gradual fading of colors, increased sensitivity to glare, halos surrounding lights, or double vision in one eye, it is essential to seek medical advice immediately. These symptoms are clear indicators of cataracts and should not be ignored.

A cataract can occur in one or both eyes, but it does not spread from one eye to the other. If left untreated, cataracts can severely interfere with daily activities and may eventually lead to blindness. While cataracts may stop growing at a certain point, they do not decrease in size or clarity on their own.

In common terms, a cataract is essentially a clouding of the eye's lens, which is typically transparent. If you have a cataract, your vision is akin to looking through a frosted or fogged-up window. Initially, you might experience only minor changes in your vision. However, as the cataract progresses, these changes become more pronounced, impacting your ability to see clearly.

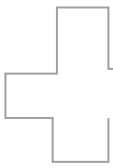
Most cataracts develop as a part of the normal aging process. In younger individuals, the lens is clear, allowing light to pass through unobstructed. Around the age of 40, the proteins in



Cataracts can severely impact daily life, with symptoms such as blurred vision and increased glare sensitivity. Seeking prompt medical advice and understanding cataract treatments are crucial for maintaining clear vision.







the lens start to break down and clump together, forming a cloudy area known as a cataract. This process can gradually reduce the lens's transparency, affecting vision.

While cataracts are most commonly seen in people over 60 years old, they can develop at any age. As the cataract progresses, the inner lens of the eye becomes increasingly cloudy, resulting in hazy vision, glare from lights, and a distortion of colors. The standard and most effective treatment for cataracts is surgical removal. During this procedure, the cloudy natural lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens. This surgery has a high success rate, and most patients experience a significant improvement in their vision following the procedure.

Several factors contribute to the development of cataracts. These include an overproduction of

oxidants, which are oxygen molecules that have been chemically altered by various factors such as smoking, prolonged exposure to ultraviolet radiation, long-term use of steroids, certain diseases like diabetes, trauma, and radiation therapy.

Cataracts are classified into different types based on their location and formation within the eye:

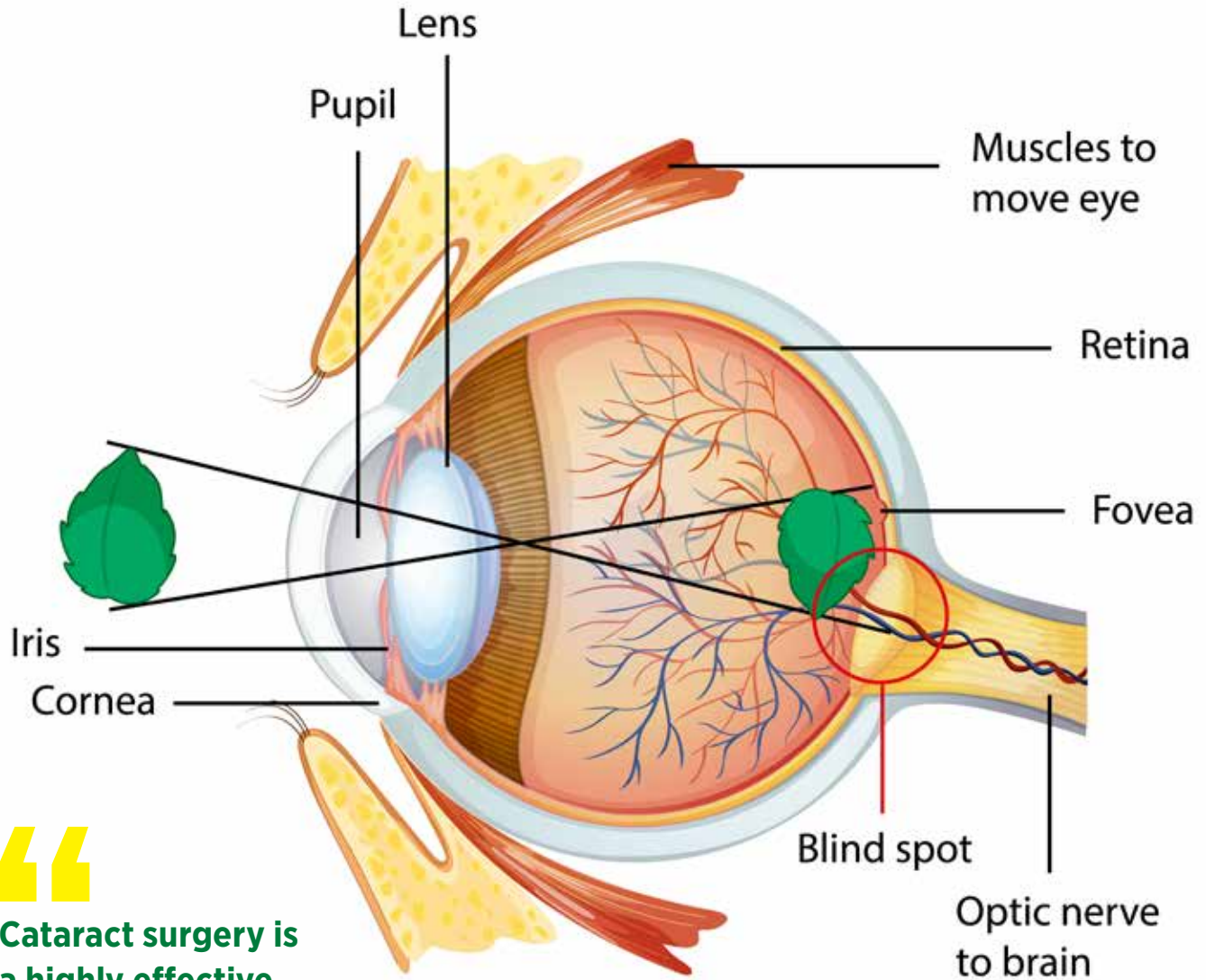
- **Nuclear Cataracts:** These form in the center of the lens, causing the nucleus to become yellow or brown. This type of cataract affects the central part of the lens and is often associated with aging.
- **Cortical Cataracts:** These are wedge-shaped cataracts that develop around the edges of the nucleus. They can cause vision distortion and glare, impacting peripheral vision.
- **Posterior Capsular Cataracts:** These cataracts form at the back of the lens

and tend to develop more rapidly than other types. They can cause significant visual impairment if not treated promptly.

- **Congenital Cataracts:** Present at birth or developing during the first year of life, congenital cataracts are less common than age-related cataracts. They can affect one or both eyes and may require early intervention to prevent long-term visual impairment.
- **Secondary Cataracts:** These occur as a result of other diseases or medications. Conditions such as glaucoma and diabetes are linked with secondary cataracts, as are the use of steroids and certain other medications.
- **Traumatic Cataracts:** Develop after an eye injury, although they may not become apparent for several years. These cataracts result from trauma to the eye and require careful management.



Cross section of Human Eye



Cataract surgery is a highly effective treatment, involving the removal of the cloudy lens and replacement with an artificial one. While complications are rare, they can be managed effectively with timely medical care.

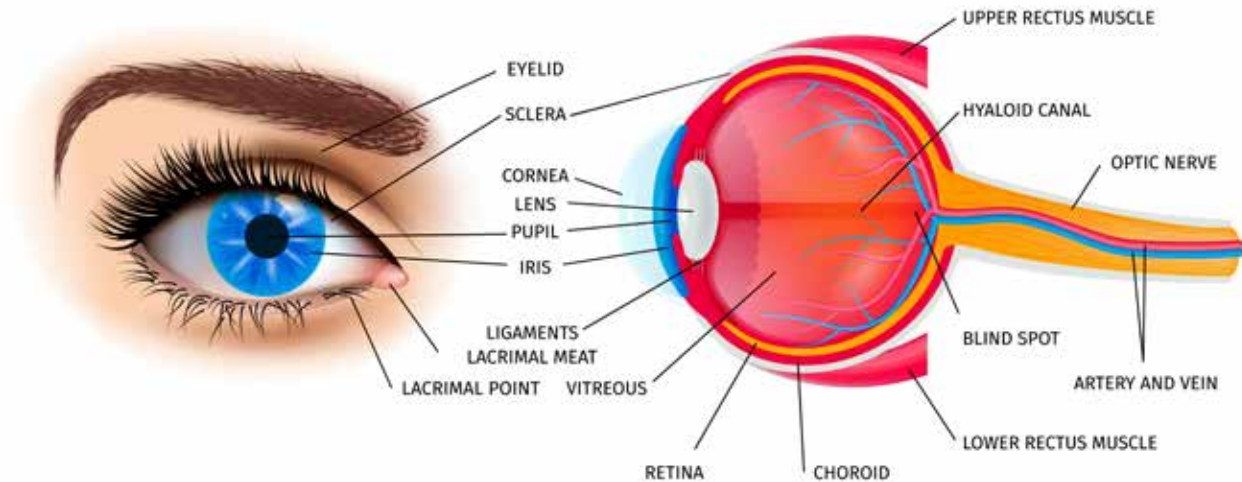
- **Radiation Cataracts:** Form after radiation treatment for cancer. Exposure to radiation can damage the lens, leading to cataract development over time.

Risk factors associated with cataracts include older age, heavy alcohol consumption, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, previous eye injuries, a family history of cataracts, excessive sun exposure, diabetes, and radiation exposure from X-rays and cancer treatments.

To diagnose cataracts, eye doctors conduct a range of tests. The most common test involves using a painless puff of air to flatten the cornea and measure eye pressure. Additionally, eye drops are used to dilate the pupils, allowing for a detailed examination of the optic nerve and retina. Other tests may evaluate glare sensitivity and color perception.

The lens of the eye, located behind the iris and pupil, functions similarly to a camera lens. It focuses light onto

ANATOMY OF THE HUMAN EYE



the retina and adjusts for both near and distant vision. Composed mainly of water and protein, the lens remains clear due to the precise arrangement of proteins. As we age, some of these proteins may clump together, forming a cataract and affecting vision clarity. Researchers suggest that factors such as smoking, diabetes, and natural wear and tear contribute to this process.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Initially, cataract symptoms might be managed with stronger eyeglasses, magnifying lenses, or anti-glare sunglasses. If these measures fail to alleviate symptoms or if cataracts interfere with daily activities such as reading or driving, surgery is typically recommended. Cataract surgery involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with an artificial lens. The procedure can be performed using techniques such as phacoemulsification, which uses ultrasound waves to break the lens into small pieces, or extra capsular surgery, which involves a larger incision to remove the cloudy lens.

POST-SURGERY CONSIDERATIONS

Although complications after cataract

surgery are rare, they can occur. Potential issues include infection, bleeding, inflammation, vision loss, double vision, and abnormal eye pressure. Prompt medical attention is crucial to effectively manage these complications.


An after-cataract, where the eye tissue behind the intraocular lens becomes cloudy, may develop months or even years after surgery. This condition is treated with a YAG laser capsulotomy, a painless outpatient procedure that creates a small opening in the cloudy tissue, allowing light to pass through. Your doctor may prescribe eye drops to manage eye pressure before or after the procedure.

TAKEAWAYS

Cataracts, while often associated with the natural ageing process, should not be dismissed as a minor inconvenience. They can profoundly affect your vision and overall quality of life, leading to challenges in performing everyday tasks and enjoying activities you once took for granted. The gradual onset of symptoms such as blurred vision, increased glare, and color distortion can signal the presence of cataracts, which require timely medical attention

to prevent further deterioration.

Understanding cataracts involves recognizing their causes, symptoms, and treatment options. Early detection and intervention are crucial for preserving vision and enhancing your daily experiences. Cataract surgery, a highly effective and commonly performed procedure, can restore clarity and improve quality of life by replacing the cloudy lens with a clear artificial one. Post-surgery, most patients experience significant improvements in vision and are able to resume normal activities with enhanced visual clarity. While complications are rare, staying informed and following your doctor's recommendations can help manage any potential issues effectively.

Ultimately, staying proactive about eye health and regular eye exams can help you detect cataracts early and address them promptly. By understanding and acting on the information about cataracts, you can take control of your vision health and ensure that you continue to see the world clearly. 

(The author is a Senior Eye Surgeon at Dr Ranjan Eye Centre, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad)



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