

A Third Wakeup Call for Innovative Research: Importance of Simple Observation, Applying thought and Using Available Knowledge

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Introduction

Health research has made tremendous progress over the years due to use of technological developments. But, sad to say, swept away by these developments, scientists have overlooked some basic aspects of research. If these mistakes are corrected, health research will become more comprehensive and will produce unexpected solutions and benefit more people.

Because most scientists have ignored the exhortation by Einstein that "It is important not to stop asking questions", research efforts are often incomplete. Another mistake is that researches have continued for many years in a rut without adequate evaluation and have often become wasteful duplications. Innovative research has been given only limited importance.

This third wakeup call emphasizes another area viz., importance to be given by scientists to simple observation, applying thought and using available knowledge. Whenever necessary, deeper studies of disease development in body and how this can be prevented have to be done. Some examples of grave mistakes are also discussed to illustrate how these mistakes can be avoided and suggestions for improvement are given. This third wakeup call first gives a gist of the two earlier wakeup calls and what these have achieved/not achieved.

All problems have multiple solutions with varying success rates. But scientists often stop research when a solution is found without giving enough attention to the basic causes of the problem and all possible methods to counteract these.

Earlier wakeup calls

An article titled "Why Tuberculosis Has Not Been Eradicated? Need for Vision and bold Innovative Research" [1] explained in detail the lacuna in research and gave the first wakeup call to Health Research Scientists to carry out innovative research with vision. There was no response to this call which was made only in the interest of achieving better health.

"Another Wake up Call for Innovative Research with Vision" [2] questioned why extreme priority was given to vaccination without trying to explore other preventive methods (particularly cheaper ones). That article also explained that a judicious use of different systems of medicine for pooling benefits, can lead to an "ideal holistic health care system".

Importance of simple observation, applying thought and using available knowledge

Some very obvious mistakes have been made by scientists because of being carried away by technology and failing to make even simple observations and applying thought which even non-scientists can do. For example, it is well known that the habit of brushing teeth daily is very common. But, despite this and advances in dentistry, dental problems are very common. Scientists have failed to reason why. For example, they did not visualize even the simple fact that cleaning teeth first and eating after that can still expose teeth to infection. Why not ask everyone to develop a habit of carrying tooth brush etc. and brushing teeth after eating any food to have a hygienically clean

mouth always? Producing excellent tooth pastes and tooth brushes are not necessary then. These become waste of money and efforts.

Eye defects are common. Scientists do not feel concerned that such problems occur widely even in early life. They are not tuned to find out reasons and preventive measures. They seem to be satisfied with bringing out spectacles which people have to buy. It is important to find preventive measures. For example, may be, special exercises and food supplements will help.

Similarly, hearing defects come up with increasing age and scientists do not consider it is their duty to find out how to prevent these. They happily carry out research to develop better and costlier hearing aids. Despite these, large number of people are not able to hear properly. Hearing aids are expensive and not affordable for most people. A review of the basic problem shows that hearing loss occurs when the tiny hairs in the inner ear are damaged or die. This often occurs with aging. Another fact is that sound waves travel from the outer ear until these reach the eardrum and make it vibrate. From there, the ossicles receive this vibration and send it towards the inner ear, where the cochlea stimulates the stereocilia, which in turn sends electric impulses via the auditory nerve to the brain. These mean that damage to any these parts and the brain can also lead to hearing loss. An essential question is how can damage of tiny hairs in the inner ear or ossicles or stereocilia or concerned brain lobes be prevented or reduced? ENT specialists and neurologists have an essential role in such inclusive and innovative research. An important field for inclusive and innovative research is to ascertain whether any diet supplement in childhood or during middle age can prevent or at least delay any of the damages mentioned above.

There may be other such omissions relating to different parts of body also. Experiments for these can lead to praiseworthy preventive measures which will help millions of people.

Such possibilities confirm that not asking more questions was a serious mistake. It is important to look out for such omissions and make corrections.

Importance of not ignoring available knowledge

An article titled "A Simple and Unique Habit which can Prevent Many Diseases Throughout Life" [3] explained how infecting organisms which enter body through nose or mouth will be

thrown out of the body by nose blowing habit and cannot cause disease because these are no longer present in the body. Moreover, anyone can also check and satisfy himself about effectiveness of nose blowing habit by blowing nose and observing that air from lungs is then thrown out through wind pipe, throat and nose and can throw out of the body infecting organisms present in any of these parts and prevent disease. This simple habit has the unique distinction that it can singly prevent many (at least 15) diseases throughout life, including some dangerous diseases which could not be eradicated despite many attempts. Many other benefits are described in the article [3]. Particularly important, nose blowing will throw out of the body corona viruses and tubercle bacilli which enter through nose and cannot do any harm. When all people practice this simple daily habit and prevent new infections, many diseases including covid 19 and tuberculosis (both dangerous diseases) can be eradicated.

A caution: A golden opportunity to have fantastic and praiseworthy improvements in health, economy, education and employment will be lost if people ignore this inexpensive, easy and harmless nose blowing habit with extraordinary benefits to them and the country.

Before publication, the manuscript was reviewed by two expert microbiologists. They and the editor approved it without any changes. Moreover, surprisingly, while communicating this, the journal referred to it as an "eminent article". Despite eminence of this method and ability of even common people to acknowledge its effectiveness, sad to say with dismay, many scientists and governments ignored this effective method without trial. They missed a golden opportunity to get rid of the corona pandemic which affected the whole world and is still continuing to do so. It is highly regrettable, shameful and despicable that even reputed health organizations like WHO, Communicable Diseases Centre, USA, Lancet journal in UK and Indian Council of Medical Research and all governments simply ignored this available praiseworthy knowledge (that too a method considered eminent by expert microbiologists) even without a small trial. They uncaringly looked aside when all these preventable calamities were occurring throughout the world.

On the other hand, if they had taken proper action, covid 19 and tuberculosis (dangerous disease which are infected through

nose) could have been controlled in 2021 itself. Lockdowns, collapse of economy and education system and creation of huge unemployment and starvation among millions of workers could have been prevented - all praiseworthy achievements which were missed because of ignoring this method even without a small trial.

Can there be a worse instance of ignoring available knowledge and failing miserably to exercise responsibilities as top leaders of world health and even missing golden opportunities to tremendously improve the health situation throughout the world?

A 15-years BCG trial by ICMR is another example of colossal wastage of funds and time by not using available knowledge which would have shown that such a trial will be a waste [1]. For details see article!

Ignoring serious problems

A serious problem which has been standing in the way of many improvements in health is that, despite extensive propaganda, millions of people ignored health warnings and suggestions (e.g. against smoking, and drinking). I have no figures, but I suspect that millions have the habits of smoking, or drinking. It is regrettable that they include many educated and intelligent people who have also ignored enlightened Buddha's exhortation that "Every human being is the author of his own health and disease". Scientists and health planners did not even question the fact that this grave situation has been continuing for many years. This is highly disappointing and despicable. This is also another example of scientists ignoring the exhortation by Einstein that "It is important not to stop asking questions". It is essential to carry out inclusive and innovative research (particularly psychological studies) to ascertain reasons for these serious mental blocks among people and how to overcome these.

Another basic problem may be that motivation for research of some scientists may be getting a salary or attainment of glory and not improving the health situation in their country. Genuine interest in research will help not only to attain glory but also profound improvement in the health situation. Scientists should have genuine interest because they are part of the society and have availed of many facilities provided by the society to reach their present position. They ought to recognize that they owe this debt to the society. Proper motivation for scientists is a serious matter and where absent should be investigated and a solution found. Similar

mental blocks or hesitancy among scientists to ask questions may be standing in the way of carrying out inclusive and innovative research. I hope these wakeup calls for inclusive and innovative research will develop genuine interest among scientists.

There may be many more problems for which ideal solutions (particularly preventive measures) can be found by asking more questions which can lead to more inclusive and innovative research. It is important to first carry out surveys to ascertain the extent and severity of these problems in order to plan research to tackle these for the benefit of most (if not all) people of the country and the world.

General remarks

Research and publication of research findings and recommendations would have required large sums of money and many hours of efforts. But, these have mostly been ignored. If these were not to be utilized why were large sums of money and many hours spend on these? Such questioning does not imply that all findings and recommendations of research should be automatically accepted. But, it strongly urges that these should be debated widely with open mind to reach a consensus about their utilization. Thereafter, governments should accept and utilize these. Any rejection of research recommendations should be openly debated, so that research workers can avoid waste of time and efforts on unacceptable or impracticable solutions of problems. Avoiding such healthy debates and their dissemination are against public interest.

It is important to set up a national authority on research and its utilization, comprising of expert research workers and organizations (both government and non-government), for periodically reviewing research findings and their utilization and provide guidance for inclusive and innovative research. A global confederation of these national authorities should also be set up.

Scientists will benefit from asking lot of relevant questions, discussing these freely and objectively and carrying out scientific studies to find proper answers. It is a pity that government organizations do not encourage scientists to question freely. Non-government organizations may be free to ask questions but may not have funds to carry out scientific studies. These are serious blocks for asking questions that are vital for progress of science. While asking questions, scientists should avoid the mentality of

a frog in a well for which the universe consists of the well only. Scientists should have an open mind to ask lot of questions within and beyond the well, without being influenced by any pressure groups. Only by asking searching questions they can develop a scientific and practical approach which is essential for progress of science and public health. A compartmental approach will retard progress or even set the clock back.

Because most problems are interconnected, the questions asked should cover wide fields so that none of the interactions will be missed. Scientists should adopt this approach which will give them a wider and clearer vision.

Most of these problems were pointed out in earlier articles [1,2] but ignored. Hence, these are again emphasised in this wake up call.

I have asked number of questions on the basis of information that I have. It is important to add questions to find all required answers for planning studies. Applying thoughts and asking questions will help to have vision and repeated questioning will give a wider vision.

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