

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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Honoured Chief Guest, other dignitaries on the dias, organisers of the conference, delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel privileged to stand before you as the President of our prestigious association, the Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists. It is indeed a privilege to represent the speciality at a time when it has made a tremendous progress. A speciality of discards till a couple of decades ago can now stand up against any other medical speciality and claim better cure rates. As dermatologists we have many advantages, it is far easier for us to arrive at the diagnosis and we can utilise several therapeutic procedures which other specialists cannot even dream of. Our major disadvantage however, is that we have to treat even the scars left over by the disease process. The newly emerging dermatosurgical and a variety of other procedures have added several dimensions to our therapeutic arsenal against disease, making it possible for us to offer complete recoveries to our patients.

This however, does not mean that the scope for further progress has come to an end. We have to find cures for diseases which are still incurable and we have also to improve upon the procedures being practised today. It is worthwhile to bear in mind that every patient would like to recover as fast as possible and also in as complete a manner as possible. For achieving this end, I often try to work out the approach that I will adopt, if I were the patient. If you are ready to take the same treatment as you are offering to your patient this is the best yardstick for an ethical practice.

There are several problems that afflict our country as a whole which have a bearing on our speciality as well. I would however, like

to discuss only a few. You must have noticed during the last few years that the pharmaceutical industry in India has been importing drugs and technologies indiscriminately and marketing these drugs at exorbitant prices. Quite often these drugs do not have any distinct advantages over the previously available drugs which in comparison are far cheaper. We therefore feel reluctant to prescribe these medicines and the industry ultimately stands to lose. I feel it will be worthwhile if the pharmaceutical industry is in constant touch with the dermatologists to decide which drugs/technologies need to be imported. The association could consider creating a special group for interaction with the pharmaceutical industry.

The research in India is another field which needs drastic overhauling. Most of us are aware that the research carried out in the medical institutions in India in the form of research projects or theses for the postgraduate students is either useless or mere duplication of the studies carried out in the West. Furthermore, many pharmaceuticals in India do not have their own R&D departments and even those who have such departments have hardly ever produced anything new. If we could organise the research projects for our postgraduates more appropriately, our departments could take up the functions of the R&D departments of the pharmaceutical firms in India. The research findings generated in the medical institutions could be utilised by the pharmaceutical industry and the industrial houses on their part could sponsor the research projects to be carried out in the medical institutions. This arrangement would work out to be much cheaper than what it is at present.

All this however is possible only if we as a nation develop self-respect and self-confidence. We have to learn to confront our problems with our own solutions. In this process, we have to get rid of the pseudoscientists in our country who can at best act as robots created in the laboratories of the West, but cannot think anything beyond. We have to create and encourage original thinkers in our country and be proud to have them. I feel ashamed that in spite of the nearly 50

years of independence we have so far achieved only geographical independence and not intellectual independence. I am sure no one is going to respect us unless we learn to respect ourselves, and create something new and original. Each one of us has some talent. We must learn to exploit our capabilities and progress as a whole. We have a great future ahead of us, we can achieve it only if we work for it.

Jai Hind and good luck

J S Pasricha  
President, IADVL 1996

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