

## Reductionism to Holism



### The Flip-Flop Science of Modern Medicine.

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While there are more than forty thousand bio-medical journals, why one more? This is a logical question. The answer would be that "knowledge advances not by repeating known facts, but by refuting false dogmas" of which there are millions in the present bio-medical sciences of reductionism. Karl Popper would be happy that we are embarking on a journey to give the healing sciences of all hues and colour scientific validity by authenticating their healing strategies. This would pick the wheat from the chaff to be included in the main stream of a judicious integrated system of healing, which becomes affordable and safe. This new science of holism in healing arts needs a mouthpiece, the present journal.

Richard Peto, professor at Oxford University, phrases the nature of the conflict in modern medicine this way: "Epidemiology is so beautiful and provides such an important perspective on human life and death, but an incredible amount of rubbish is published." British epidemiologists George Davey Smith and Shah Ebrahim, co-editors of The International Journal of Epidemiology, discussed this issue in an editorial titled "Epidemiology — Is It Time to Call It a Day?" They wrote that either when a randomized trial was mounted to test a hypothesis supported by results from large observational studies, the hypothesis failed the test or the test failed to confirm the hypothesis.

The randomized placebo-controlled, double-blind trials are typically considered the gold standard for establishing reliable knowledge about whether a drug, surgical intervention or diet is really safe and effective. However, these trials are flawed in their scientific foundation in addition to their exorbitant cost. That is for a separate editorial. These limitations mean that most of what doctors do today is based on a foundation built on soft sand. The adverse drug reactions (ADR) in the long run of those very drugs that have gone through the expensive RCTs have been one of the leading causes of death in the US as shown by the Institute of Medicine audit

recently.

The process by which we arrive at conclusions from RCTs is otherwise called induction. Induction was known long before even Aristotle, but was brought into main line science by Sir Francis Bacon who later systematised induction as it is known to us today. Induction is based on the belief of John Hume who wrote about the uniformity in nature-if one has seen a sample, he has seen it all. Blasé Pascal, a Parish Priest, brought in the concept of probabilities into science while called upon to arbitrate in a game of dice. Most of RCT results are only approximations, otherwise called probabilities. In a recent book, *Cult of Statistical Science*, Stephen Ziliak and Deirdre N McClosky have systematically debunked the statistical methods used in RCTs and many other fields. (Michigan University Press, 2008) None of these statistical methods account for that universal phenomenon inside the dynamic human body, as in this dynamic world, the butterfly effect of Edward Lawrence.

The next danger is in the area of doctors predicting the unpredictable future of the "well" segment of society by the most fashionable "routine screening of the apparently healthy population"-a new flourishing industry. The British Medical Journal called it the Screening Industry and wrote an editorial "routine screening of the apparently healthy could be very dangerous to the public!" Professor William Firth of the Startheclde University in Glasgow has beautifully shown how the future predictions by doctors based on the reductionistic science is dangerous in a non-linear dynamic human system, which follows the holistic science of CHAOS. My esteemed colleague, Prof Rustum Roy, has written more on that in his editorial. All is not well in the field of reductionism in modern medicine. It is time to call it a day and introduce the correct science of holism to human physiology and the medical care system, which has now become a medical scare system.

One need not be too much worried about losing one's credibility by dabbling in the areas of complementary medicines when one has unquestioned "scientific" credentials. The former greats in science also did exactly that -lateral thinking - which is what takes wisdom forwards. Isaac Newton's Laws of Deterministic Predictability did not lose their sheen just because Newton spent most of his time in alchemy, astrology and Biblical

exegesis. Galileo spent a lot of time practising astrology - a great science in Indian systems. Interpreting data from others more accurately also is not derogatory. Albert Einstein got his Nobel for making the world understand photo-electricity and Brownian movements in liquids! Even Nobel prizes were given to false claims in the past. The 1927 Nobel went for showing that schizophrenia and the dreaded GPI could be treated by injecting the malarial parasite into the patient, which must have killed countless people. Again in 1949 the Nobel went to the person who thought that cutting a part of the brain cured Schizophrenia. In 1976 the Nobel for medicine was given to the person for showing that lentiviruses cause mad cow disease and so on. Of course, prions also got the Nobel in 1997!

This first issue contains two very important healing outcomes - one in the area of cancer relief and the other one in the realm of infection control. Both papers take knowledge forwards in their respective areas-the motto of JSO! Who knows what the future holds in its womb? It is quite possible that at a future date JSO might put together a new system of medical care, meta medicine, incorporating the emergency methods from modern medicine clubbed with inexpensive methods from many other systems duly authenticated using hard scientific yardsticks for the management of the majority of illnesses like the minor illness syndromes, hypochondriasis, doctor-thinks-you-have-a-disease syndromes and, the chronic incurable diseases, making the new system patient friendly, inexpensive, and accessible to even the poor who, incidentally, have the highest incidence of any illness man is heir to. Long live JSO.

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### **Oath of the Ancient Indian Physician**

The oath of the ancient Indian Ayurvedic physician that has passed on through generations confirms the popular belief that Ayurveda is, above all other things, the science of life. The oath says:  
Be chaste and sparing in the use of food and drink. Speak the truth. Do not eat meat. Care for the good of all living beings. Devote yourself to the healing of the sick even if your life is at stake. Do no harm to the sick. Never desire another man's wife or material goods. Wear simple clothes. Do not touch alcohol. Speak clearly, gently, truly and properly. Always seek knowledge. Do not treat a woman when her man is not present. Never take a gift from a woman without her husband's knowledge. When you enter any house, take care of your dress, deportment and behaviour. While dealing with a patient, attend to nothing other than what concerns the patient. Keep the confidence of patients and their householders. Never speak of possible death to your patient if that might hurt him or anybody else. May the gods help you if you abide by this oath. If you violate, the curse of gods will fall upon you.