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Incubating Integrative Medicine in India through PMO's Atal Incubator Scheme of Niti Aayog

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Abstract
Background: Incubation centers are considered important tools to advance in a field of activity with multidisciplinary approach. The idea of incubation emerged long time back but it is actively pursued by funding agencies as a medium to propel community development. India's fast developing economy had limited tryst with Integrative Medicine until Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, role modelled for Yoga in Chandigarh on the occasion of International Yoga Day. Integrative Medicine is a growing field and widely accepted as a cost-effective problem solving method that simplifies the management of incurable and complex disorders where modern medicine has little to offer. ***Summary:*** Development of integrative medicine health incubator is the key to development of multidisciplinary program that offers to reduce the cost of healthcare, out of pocket expenses and emphasizes on preventive healthcare as means to achieve a healthy population in a developing country like India. ***Key Message:*** Incubation center may become practical solution for many health problems in singular platform for healthier society by integrating traditional and modern medicine.

Introduction

Integrative medicine is the emerging platform as it involves cure-oriented treatment including every aspect of a person such as life style, etc. Bringing integrated medicine into practice is a great challenge. Incubation centers can become one of the practical solutions for this. It will bring everything at a single platform. The idea of incubation centers emerged in the USA and from where it evolved in the atmosphere with the number of models varying from public to private incubation hubs [1]. Incubation centers are designed to promote economic growth, making best use of resources, survival and advancement of new start-up firms gradually, creating jobs and wealth opportunities, enhancing entrepreneurial environment, bringing up new technologies, escalating growth in a local industry. Initially, incubation programs focused on technology and services firms but later it extended and involved various other industries yet it remains unexplored in the medical institutes through which the potential to stretch the limits of health sector become a reality. The novel idea involves the integration of health care with modern and traditional medicine, which helps the patients with curable and incurable disease through a more scientific approach that does not necessarily depend on pharma investments (Figure 1). For example, a rehabilita-

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tion center for persons suffering from lethal disease like Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), for which cure is still far away, can provide awareness and relief by genetic counselling and rehabilitation that a Government Medical Institute is not geared up for. An incubation center for similar diseases is an urgent requirement, given the emphasis the current governments are laying on disability.

International Status

The origin of business incubator originated in the USA in 1959; then, it evolved further in Canada's economic development. There are many incubation centers worldwide. According to a report in 2006, there were 7,000 incubators around the world in total. A total of 1,400 were in North America, 1,000 in Europe, 200 in the UK, 400 in China, and 355 in Korea. India also had 120 incubators together with 40 Science and Technology Entrepreneurs Parks (STEP) [2]. United Kingdom Business Incubation estimated the impact of this incubation scheme on the country's economy and human resources, which proved that this could provide around 167 jobs per incubator, and root for approximately 30 entrepreneurial companies at a time. Although incubation centers for medical institutes are grossly lacking worldwide, there is increasing demand to cater to such a facility under a singular platform.

National Status

In the Indian scenario, around 1980, National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board initiated the STEP and, in the early 2000, technology business incubators. India has nearly 120 incubators. There are major examples of incubation centers established in India such as SIDBI Innovation and Incubation Centre started by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur; Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship, Ahmedabad; Technology Business Incubator, National Institute of Technology Calicut; Vellore Institute of Technology-Technology Business Incubator; and Amity Innovation Incubator; etc. [3]. The IIT-Patna developed a venture for medical technology on campus. In the scheme, they planned to work economically fit versions of machines like X-ray, MRI, etc., but the idea of bringing everything together at one platform is still lacking. The idea is to bring a patient-centered scheme that would focus on the establishment of AIC in underserved and unserved areas of preventive and curative healthcare delivery system for patients with curable and incurables diseases.

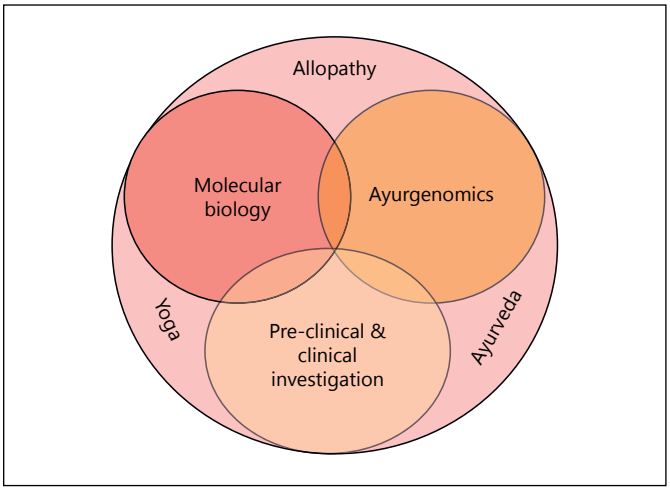

Fig. 1. Schematic representation showing integration of modern and ancient medical system of treatment and investigation.

In this futuristic scheme, the idea is to incubate the start-ups for mentoring in the field of genetic testing of incurable Muscular Dystrophy, Physiotherapy and Yoga Outreach, Engineering necessary equipment for MD group and Nationwide Awareness program. Moreover, the nature of the scheme is financial and social inclusion of the MD Patient by connecting them to the mainstream, scientifically awarded community for better understanding of their rights and obtaining holistic care. The center also focused on providing holistic healthcare and management to the patient group of all sections of the society.

To provide effective healthcare to India's rural population is the basic aim of the mission, focusing 18 states which include Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttaranchal, and Uttar Pradesh. Key collaboration in the international scientific community, NGOs, and engineering sector is essential for early implementation of these types of missions and to make these missions cost-effective for the poor. Different schemes have been introduced by the Government of India to devise strategies to enhance access to underprivileged people. National Health Insurance scheme is one among all schemes which provides health insurance to people from Below Poverty Line with the objective to bear the expenditure of health stocks; however, this has not been completely implemented in India.

Results

The proposed center can incubate preventive approach to spread of incurable disease in families, thus reducing both health budgets as well as empower the carrier females. The results of the study can give an insight into the burden of the problem of sporadic DMD/BMD cases. This can also be used to design health education and awareness campaign for primordial prevention of children born with DMD. Using the genetic testing facility on the global platform, it can be a source of policy initiatives to transform Indian healthcare sector by benchmarking Indian healthcare service which comprises traditional and modern medicine at cheaper rates. Due to the incurable nature of disease, another focus of the center is to provide not only genetic but also holistic approach for the MD patient in which the main focus could be on complementary and alternative approach, which includes Ayurveda, which is known to improve the health of incurable MD patients. Treatment with the yoga and physiotherapy could also be provided which may improve their health at greater level. As MD patients frequently face cardiovascular, respiratory problems and problems like muscle stiffness which can easily be reduced through Yoga-asana, Pranayama, and Physiotherapy, and these can be published in the international peer-reviewed journals projecting traditional medicine in world literature.

Hydrotherapy can be other option for the patient in integrative healthcare that involves the use of water for pain relief and treatment will also be made available. Through this approach, not only health and mind but also their cognitive ability will be tested to improvement.

Neuropsychological rehabilitation can be another thoughtful idea through which cognitive domains can be analyzed through neuropsychology tests. These facilities do not exist anywhere in the country for the people who can hardly perform their day-to-day activity themselves and are an important part of our society. The main purpose of the proposed center will be to integrate the complementary and alternative holistic approaches including Ayurveda and Yoga.

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