

INDIA BEYOND 2020 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

DIGITAL CONFERENCE



DR. V. MOHAN

Indian Diabetologist

HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

Dr. V. Mohan started straight into the subject of Medical Research. He says that the one question that people ask him which is surprising is “can medical research be done in India”. Dr. Mohan says that one should not even ask such a question as he with so much confidence states that we should be the leaders in research, we should be the world leaders beating China, The United States etc. Today we are emerging as a world nation. So such questions are totally irrelevant to be asked. He adds, rather than asking such questions, we should think of ways how we can become efficient and prove to the world. If we take Medical Research in India, India has so many phenotypes and genotypes, each phenotype and each genotype is so different that for the next 50 years if we work it won't be sufficient to bring out novel research in India because so much needs to be done. If we take diabetes there are so many unanswered questions.

We always knew that Type 2 Diabetes can occur 30 years 20

INDIA BEYOND 2020 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

years younger than in the west. Why? We still don't know. We are researching and we are finding so many things. We have found for example, that the pancreatic beta cell function goes down very rapidly. If we take 100 Indians who are in the stage of pre diabetes and we take 100 white people who have pre diabetes, the white man may be much bigger as in BMI (Body Mass Index) may be higher, body weight may be higher still he doesn't progress fast. But we thin Indians progress very fast. Within 3 years we have zoomed across to the state of diabetes. A thin Indian is being more insulin resistant than a fat American. Why? And what can we do to prevent it? There are many many questions like this which begs answers.

Coming to more practical aspects which Prof. Kalam would have liked he was always for low cost technology. He was always for make in India. He was always for the PURA. So inspired by him many years ago, in the village of Chunampet we set up along with the help of the National Agro Foundation, a telemedicine van - the first telemedicine facility for diabetes covering 42 villages in and around Chunampet. We built a rural centre providing all the facilities available in the urban areas. An exact transformation of his PURA in the field of diabetes.

What it resulted in is, people could get low cost treatment at their doorstep without travelling to Chennai. Today with Covid 19, telemedicine has reached its peak, a methodology

INDIA BEYOND 2020 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

which is not even legalised. But within a week or two of Covid coming in, telemedicine guidelines were introduced, it was made legalised and thousands of doctors all over India had done hundreds and hundreds of tele consultation right from home. So telemedicine really took off. Dr. Kalam would have been very happy and proud that such a field actually opened up.

Talking about low cost Dr. Mohan said “If we take a small insulin pump the minimum cost is 2.5 lakhs. I am sure if Indian engineers come together we can do it for 20 thousand rupees. If we sit down together, we can produce in India. Infact technology is developing so fast and in India we can produce things at such low cost and we can actually be a world leader. I would say follow up action is more important. If we are able to meet instead of virtually but say in a room when we sit down and write down the priorities for the country in the medical field, and get ten of the top scientists from other fields to come in and say this is what we need, then for sure India will take leaps and bounds in its research field, in its technology, and thereby reaching out to the poorest of the poor.

Today, we have the best of everything but only the rich can afford it. 50 % of the entire metformin (for diabetes) that is used in the Unites States comes from India. So India has a lot of scope in the area of Medical Research, Medical Education

INDIA BEYOND 2020 CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT

and in Technology.”

As a wind up note Dr. Mohan said thus: “I am sure nothing will please Dr. Abdul Kalam than to see such a forum being formed by eminent people with the people in mind. Dr. Kalam always put the poor man in front like Gandhi said think of the poor man on the street, if its not going to help him, don't do it.”

