



Seminar on “Herbal Drugs: Present status and future prospects”

A two day seminar on ‘Herbal Drugs: Present Status and Future Prospects’ was held on 7th and 8th April 2001, at B.V. Patel PERD Centre, Ahmedabad, as a part of its activities in symposia, seminars and continuing education program. The seminar was attended by about 125 participants from academia and industries including SSIs, and other interested people in the field like Ayurvedic practitioners (Vaidya). The seminar was co-sponsored by Department of Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathy, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

In last few decades, an exponential growth has been observed in the field of alternative medicine. It is getting popularized in developing and developed countries due to its natural origin and lesser side effects. Ayurveda is an ancient heritage of India in health care system, and along with this, Unani and Siddha systems are also in practice. In olden times Vaidyas used to make drug preparations according to the requirement of their patient. But the scene has changed today and due to increased demand, herbal preparations are now being manufactured by herbal drug industries where manufacturers are facing problems of authentication of drug and supply of genuine raw material. Due to lack of proper standard parameters the industries are not able to standardize the Quality Control parameters, which ultimately affect the consumers. All these issues were discussed in the seminar. Prof. Harish Padh (Director, PERD) in his introductory inaugural speech introduced the theme of seminar and emphasized on these points and their significance in present era.

The event was started with the talk on herbal drug industries - India and abroad by Dr. D. B. A. Narayana, Director, Dabur Research Foundation, Ghaziabad. Dr. Narayana discussed about the Indian contribution in International herbal market. He emphasized on novel research for capturing the market as well as to remain in the market after year 2005. He also discussed the ways to reach international market. Phytochemical standardization of herbal drugs-the burning issue was discussed by Ms. S. Satakopan, Retired Senior Scientists, Food and Drug Laboratory, Baroda and Dr. M. Rajani, Scientist, B. V. Patel PERD Centre. Setting up the parameters for highly processed materials in herbal formulation was also discussed. The importance and challenges of conducting clinical research and developing some simple bioassays for biological standardization of herbal drugs were the focus of Dr. U.M. Thatte’s deliberation. Dr. Thatte is Associate Professor in Seth G. S. Medical College, Mumbai. Pharmacological and Toxicological evaluation of drugs was dealt by Dr. R. C. Srimal, Emeritus Scientist, ITRC, Lucknow. He gave information on toxic herbal drugs in use as well as on various animals model for toxicity

and safety evaluation. Shri. S. P. Adesara, Commissioner, Food and Drug Control Administration, Gujarat, focused on legal and regulatory aspects of herbal drugs while information related to revised schedule T for Good Manufacturing Practices for herbal preparations was given by Shri. K. M. Patel, Jt. Commissioner FDCA, Gujarat. The buzz words WTO, IPR and Patents in herbal sector were the focus of Dr. Narayana's second talk. He mentioned about the differences in getting patents in India and other countries.

Ambiguity of our own system of medicine - the Ayurveda, is the interpretation of names and description of drugs given authentic books like Charak Sanhita, Susrusha etc. Due to the lack of scientific names in the original texts, under one name, different plants are known in different parts of the country as per the description, which makes the drug controversial e.g. Jivanti, Brahmi. The topic controversial drugs in Ayurveda was dealt by Prof. Malti Chauhan, Jamnagar Ayurved University. The subject was a blend of modern and Ayurvedic system of health care. Plant Biotechnology was the subject covered by Prof. M R. Heble, Scientific Advisor, The Kelkar Education Trust, Mumbai. He discussed the significance of tissue culture in production of authentic material as well as in conservation of biodiversity. He also mentioned the role of biotransformation in developing therapeutic molecules. Natural products in drug discovery and development was discussed in detail by Prof. E. Venkata Rao, Advisor-Natural Products, Natco Pharma, Hyderabad, who mentioned the potential of natural products in drug discovery.

In the concluding session Mr. Tamal Sarkar Co-ordinator UNIDO expressed his view regarding the significance of the seminar and also about the problems faced by SSIs which require a common platform like PERD. In this connection, Prof. Harish Padh told about the facilities available with PERD which can be made available to SSIs. The seminar was concluded with a vote of thanks by Prof. H. Padh.