

HEALTH SCIENCES IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY : A PREVIEW

SISIR K. MAJUMDAR*

Impermanence is the law of Nature. Nothing is static. The world is dynamic. It is changing every day. We need to march with the dynamic history of a changing world. Health sciences are no exception. Intellectualization of all professions, including the health profession, is the order of the day. Sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc., are already playing a significant role in the practice of medicine. Medico-legal and medico-moral principles are already dictating the conduct of medical profession. Modern medicine though founded on scientific study may also be incomplete or even erroneous. Alternative forms of medicine have already made significant inroads into the popular perception of treatment strategy of various incurable diseases of still unknown aetiology. Modern medicine, rather "Rational Medicine of Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.)", as Greeks claim, is still the jewel in the crown of health sciences. But equally, alternative medicine needs our tolerance and even respect and not disdain. These are the realities of the twenty-first century medicine. All systems of health sciences will meet in a confluence of collective alleviation of pathos of humankind; one will complement another. The face of health sciences has already changed and will go on changing. Human Genome, Genetic Engineering, Genetherapy and Genetics are new cards on the table. In the elucidation of root cause of incurable diseases like cancer, etc, Molecular Biology and Medicine have brought a new ray of hope.

In the healthcare delivery system, it is the individual – his or her pain or relief that matters and not machine or statistics and outcome-based results should get due recognition. Our approach in this millennium should be both evidence-based and experience-based. Albert Einstein rightly said : "Not everything that can be counted always counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."
