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**Letter to the Editor****Ambiversive nature of Indian population in disease management:  
what is the need of the hour?**

Sir,

Allopathic and ayurvedic medicines have been used since ages, and both have their advantages and disadvantages. Not a single allopathic drug manufactured until date is free from side effects. Then why is allopathic medicine still preferred? Mainly because everyone of us need quick relief and/or fast action. In the case of HIV, cancer, stroke, myocardial infarction, medical emergency and/or casualty cases ayurvedic medicines are either unavailable or can't be used.

Ayurveda is the science of healing using medicinal herbs/plants.<sup>1,2</sup> Ayurvedic medicines also have side-effects.<sup>3,4</sup> Allopathic medicines are slightly costlier compared to ayurvedic medicines. Our ancestors believe that they have been using ayurvedic medicines since childhood and were very effective and want to continue with them. In allopathic medicines, some side-effects are unavoidable. But drug would have undergone scrutinized clinical trials and preclinical testing to avoid any harm to population that uses them.<sup>5</sup>

Allopathic doctors are great in the sense they try to cure things the best possible way. Only because of some quacks that profession is being blamed. Pharma companies also need to be blamed for hiding flaws about clinical trials on newer medicines. They off late have attracted adverse publicity, much of it well-deserved, regarding pricing of drugs, non-revelation of adverse event data. However, it cannot be forgotten that, despite these flaws, the pharma sector is accountable for the majority of the advances of the past more than 50 years without which medical care would have stood still.

Where are we now? Our ancestors were much healthier than us. They were consuming sweets in whopping quantities, downing veg and non-veg food and about 100 times healthier and lived long happy lives. People are concerned about health, but do not know what is to be done? All is to be blamed to the sedentary lifestyle that has been followed for years. People who have money are dieting, can't eat much because of the disease condition and who don't have money can't afford to eat and for their ill-health can't afford medical expenses as well. When people lose faith in all medicines they go to temples, mosques, church and pray to almighty.

Mantras are divine, but can mantras cure diseases remains question unanswered?

When nothing turns out people have to get admitted in one of the multispecialty clinics and undergo radiation therapy, surgery or intensive medical treatment. By the time, a super-specialist sees their case not much time would have been left for damage control. Those patients are lucky who have received correct treatment for their disease in time. Don't know who is to be blamed? Is it the quack who he had faith earlier or to the ayurvedic doctor who promised him everything will be fine or the patient himself for being a wanderer and not sticking at one place? It is easy to pick between good and the bad but to pick one of the two good and one out of the two bad is very difficult, which in turn is dependent on the fate of an individual. People get cheated because they end up trusting everybody. Some need a pill for every ill-condition.

First year is a critical time to treat any disease. Often much of the damage occurs early within a few weeks of onset of disease. Patients use medicines that are either legal or illegal, because their lives would have become dull or painful, start hating their work since they would have been estranged from their near and dear ones. It tells us that in healthy societies medicine use is convivial and celebrative whereas, in others, it is shameful and addictive.

Patients when they take drugs they realize that life just isn't fun anymore. These drugs have become a part of their daily routine. They wonder for how long will it last, the feeling of staying alive, of having got through the veil that hides beauty and the wonders of celestial vistas? Life is not a gamble after all and life is not just alive but to live well. One shouldn't wait until everything comes on the right track as things will never be perfect, and there will be obstacles challenges and less than perfect conditions.

Every rupee that individual has saved by losing sweat should be spent judiciously towards disease. Need of the hour is routine medical checkup once a year, or at least once in 5 years might detect some abnormalities if present. Time is an amazing equalizer. No matter what people say but if you stay true to yourself and keep moving forward, things come around. There is a need for eating freshly prepared food, fish, fruits and vegetables. Walking a mile

everyday. Keeping regular check on health condition. Any noticeable uneasiness should be dealt immediately. Enjoy life without worries, avoid doing mistakes and do what you love doing. Are there things that you'd like to change? For you never know how much time is left. That can still be rearranged.

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