

DIA's 8th Annual Conference kicks-off in Bangalore

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Themed, 'The New Clinical Research Environment in India: Implications and Opportunities', the event was graced by eminent guests from the industry including, Padmashree Prof Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, Chairman, Task Force for Research, Apollo Hospitals Group and Ms Anu Acharya, CEO, mapmygenome.in, who were also the keynote speakers.

The program chairs were held by Mr Shoibal Mukherjee, VP, CMO (India) & Head Asia Medical Sciences Group, Quintiles, and Mr Sairamkumar J, Sr VP & Global Delivery Head, Cognizant Life Sciences. The guest of honor, Mr M Madan Gopal, IAS, Principal Secretary to Government of Karnataka, Health and Family Welfare Department, addressed the gathering based on its theme.

Mr Madan Gopal said, "We are struggling very much in infant & mother mortality and public healthcare issues. Healthcare will play a significant role in combating it. Research in the basic sciences is on the decline in the country. We need to focus on basic science research which is the foundation for the healthcare industry." He felt that basic sciences no longer attract people as it requires commitment and passion.

"However, in countries like US and Europe, a lot of focus is given to basic sciences, which lays the foundation for science and technological developments," he added.

Mr Gopal also expressed that India is grappling with healthcare issues in the areas of affordability, accessibility and quality.

Mr Shoibal Mukherjee in his speech said that clinical research is important for India, as the country has major disease burdens. "We need to go beyond our model and look at countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, and South-east Asia."

Commenting on the sensitive issue of clinical trials, Mr Gopal said, "While conducting clinical trials, ethics should not be overlooked. The Supreme Court has expressed its concern stating that people in India are subjected to clinical trials which cannot be carried out in any other civilized country. People under clinical trials need to be protected. If this is taken care, we can witness tremendous growth in clinical research."

Mr Sairamkumar expressed that India is passing through an exciting time in the areas of pharmaceutical and clinical research. He said that India has a great potential for clinical research. "We have many problems to overcome but we have to seize the opportunities," he said.

Mr Gopal addressed the dramatic changes taking place in the discovery of new drugs. "Today the processes have become very systematic. Both, identification and modification of chemical structures to achieve specific results in biologics is now a complex process. Today, IT-based process technologies is on the rise," he added.

Talking about diagnostic counseling, Mr Gopal said that India lacks much in the area of diagnostic counseling. He opined, "Counseling during pre-diagnostic and post-diagnostic stage will improve the confidence levels of patients and their families."

Mr Gopal culminated his speech by admonishing the participants by asking them to come up with discussions and solutions in specific relation to clinical research.