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Slowdown in clinical research to increase disease burden

08 May 2014 | News | By Rahul Koul Koul

Slowdown in clinical research to increase disease burden



Despite being home to one sixth of the world's population and carrying one fifth of the world's disease burden, yet less than 2 percent of global clinical research takes place in India. This is bad news for patients suffering from critical diseases. The reasons for decrease include issues such as regulatory hassels, anti-trial activists, compensation issues, patient deaths etc.Â

Suneela Thatte, President, Indian Society for Clinical Research (ISCR) says "The quest for finding superior and lifesaving medicines is an ongoing one. For every medicine and device that meets with marketing approval, there is a larger story of years of research in laboratories and extensive patient participation in clinical research to determine their safety and efficacy,"

She further adds, "Patients help patients. Today all of us have access to better and newer treatments because of patients who have participated in clinical trials. Thus, we are all beneficiaries of clinical research. Yet it is unfortunate that the progress of clinical research in India has been stalled by several extraneous factors denying patients the opportunity to participate in and benefit from ongoing clinical research. The impact of this on patients is huge. A slowdown in clinical research in the country means little or no access to newer and better medicines for our patients and a rising disease burden."

"We request the media to support us in highlighting the impact of the current regulatory environment on patients and what this means for the future of healthcare in our country. The declining number of clinical trials in India does not augur well for a country with an increasing healthcare burden," mentions Suneela. "We also ask the media to join us in paying tribute to patients across India whose participation in clinical trials has made access to today's medicines possible. For all those who live in hope of a cure, we need an environment that fosters clinical research, drug discovery and innovation."

According to the press release issued by ISCR, thousands of patients in India, as across the world, have through their participation in clinical research made the discovery of new and better medicines and devices possible. If there are improved survival rates for cancer today, lower HIV-related deaths, better management of diseases like diabetes and dementia, better quality of life for the aged, it is because of patients who have participated in clinical research. They are the unsung heroes because of whom we have access to groundbreaking scientific advances in healthcare.

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The release goes on to appreciate the fighting spirit of patients. It mentions, "While there are many patients who have participated in and benefitted from new medicines and devices made possible through clinical research, there are many patients who have an unmet medical need and who live in hope of a cure or better quality of life."

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