BioSpectrum
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

International Women's Day- Dr. Jugnu Jain

05 March 2018 | Features

Dr. Jugnu Jain, Co-founder & CEO, Sapien BioSciences



Dr Jugnu Jain, a molecular geneticist and cell biologist by training and obtained her PhD from Cambridge University (UK), followed by a post-doc and instructorship at Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School at Boston. She started Sapien and Saarum along with her co- founders, Prithi and Sreevatsa in 2011 after returning to India. Sapien has fully functional labs located within the Apollo Health City Campus in Hyderabad.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Dr. Jugnu Jain shares her personal side with BioSpectrum-

My Daily Routine-

My routine varies from weekdays vs. Sunday. Weekdays I am up by 5.15am, and headed to my yoga class by 5.45am. I'm back home by 7.15am and get to work by 9am.

The day flies by super busy taking care of many aspects of our unique business from scientific experiments and planning, to call/meetings with clients/collaborators, project meetings, and routine activities. Being in a small start-up requires having a flexible schedule and juggle priorities to be agile. I usually bring my own lunch which saves time and provides healthy balanced food. A few of us often have lunch together. I usually wrap up around 5.30pm and head home. It's common to have late evening calls with international clients or some urgent work to complete at home.

I tend to have dinner by 7.30pm, catch up with family and friends, read for a while and go to sleep by 10pm. I rarely watch television. Since I have a driver, I use the time during the morning drive to work for phone calls.

Sundays are relaxed starting with having tea leisurely in my balcony, enjoying special breakfast, sometimes taking in an art movie, doing house chores, meeting friends and family. I must confess work often spills over to Sundays also so it's rare to have a day without any work but by and large, Sundays are for relaxing.

My idea of fitness and nutrition-

Both are extremely important to maintain a balance between my mental and physical fitness. I do yoga during weekdays. Being physically active is very important to deal with stress also.

I tend to eat home food and have moved towards organic milk, eggs, and fresh produce wherever possible. I pay more emphasis on consuming local and seasonal food, incorporating more varieties of grains such as millets, vegetables and fruits in my diet. We are blessed to have Farmer's markets every week in our neighbourhood in Hyderabad. But one wonders sometimes if it's a losing battle with so much pollution all around.

My favourite cuisine-

I enjoy having variety in my food and don't have one favourite cuisine. At home we usually have all types of vegetarian Indian food from different parts of the country but when we go out, I love to try non-Indian food especially Mexican, Italian, Chinese cuisine. Fresh salads are very tempting.

My favourite holiday spot-

I love exploring new places so by definition, I don't have a favourite holiday spot. Among places I remember fondly are Boston and Montreal (especially Summer and Fall), Italy, Hawaii and Rajasthan any time. Also quiet hill stations with quaint old restored hotels with period furniture.

My idea of balance between personal and professional life-

I'm afraid it's not a great balance at the moment since it's tilted towards my professional life due to being a first-time entrepreneur in a unique business which is still scaling up despite the uncertainties and surprises that are not in my control. I learnt long ago from Stephen Covey's '7 habits of highly effective people' that we have only 1 life, not a separate personal or a professional life, so I build in time to exercise regularly, eat healthy food, read fiction and non-fiction, and keep in touch with my friends and family for my emotional and physical well-being. I would like to have more time to travel and explore Hyderabad and the world. I am working towards it -hopefully soon.

My role model-

I have several role models and teachings that I turn to for inspiration. My father taught me organization and planning, my mother to care for people and have a sense of humour, my mausaji introduced me to a career in science, my postdoc advisor for singular focus and professional excellence, and several mentors at Vertex on leadership, change, negotiation, teamwork.

There is a muhavara in Hindi that says 'sadhu aisa chahiye, jaisa soop subhaaye. Saar saar ko gahi rahey, thotha de udaaye" which basically means one should try to imbibe only the good qualities from anyone and toss away the bad ones. So I count many as my mentor. At a philosophical level, Vivekanad's teachings have influenced and sustained me during tough times.