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Conference Proceedings

Proceedings of a Panel Discussion on “Better Public Health through Pharmacovigilance” held during Vice-Chancellor’s Conclave organized by IES Institute of Pharmacy, IES University, Bhopal in collaboration with Society of Pharmacovigilance India (SOPI) and Healthcopeia Foundation on December 18, 2021

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A panel discussion was held on the topic “Better public health through Pharmacovigilance” during Vice-Chancellor’s Conclave organized by IES Institute of Pharmacy, IES University, Bhopal in collaboration with Society of Pharmacovigilance India (SOPI) and Healthcopeia Foundation on 18 December 2021, in virtual mode. Dr. Sunita Singh, Hon’ble Pro-Chancellor, IES University, Bhopal was the Chief Guest at this occasion whereas Guest of Honour and Eminent Panellists included Dr. K. C. Singhal, Ex. Vice-Chancellor, NIMS University, Jaipur, Dr. Tripta S. Bhagat, Vice-Chancellor, Santosh University, Ghaziabad, Dr. Manoj Mittal, Vice-Chancellor, Bhabha University, Bhopal, Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman, National Secretary, Society of Pharmacovigilance India and Mr. Sacheen Gandhi, Founder and Director, Healthcopeia Foundation, India. Panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Geer, Professor of Pharmacology at the Dept. of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Kashmir and Member, SoPI.

Proceedings of the session were opened by Mrs. Reenu Yadav, Principal, IITM (Deptt. of Pharmacy) of IES University with her introductory remarks that was followed by introduction of all the guests and panellists by Ms. Sanika Srivastava of IES University. This was followed by opening remarks by Mr. Sacheen Gandhi of Healthcopeia Foundation in which he mentioned that Healthcopeia Foundation has been conducting social talks and rural health camps for the past eleven years and has been working on public health and welfare related issues. Mr. Sacheen said that the number of adverse drug reactions reported from

India are the lowest in the world because of laxity by the hospitals despite 440 ADR reporting centres established by the government along the length and breadth of India. He revealed that during his visit to some of these ADR reporting centres he and his team observed that people at large living in the vicinity of these centres were not aware at all about ADRs and ADR reporting centres. He held lack of public awareness responsible for low ADR reporting in India and emphasized upon the need for establishing public awareness centres for pharmacovigilance in rural and urban areas on the lines of such centres established by Healthcopeia Foundation in the recent past.

Dr. Ajay Kumar, Pro Vice-Chancellor, IES University while representing and chairing the session on behalf of Dr. Sunita Singh, Pro-Chancellor of IES University and speaking at this occasion highlighted the role played by IES University over the past sixteen years towards the development and growth of the society. He appreciated the concept of Pharmacovigilance and the role played by the Institute of Pharmacy of the University in this field. Dr. Ajay Kumar acknowledged the contributions of this Institute as a flagship Institute of the university particularly during COVID era. He underlined the need for creating substantial awareness about Pharmacovigilance and educating people about its pros and cons and expressed his gratitude to the organizers of this panel discussion.

Initiating the panel discussion on the topic, “Better public health through pharmacovigilance” and explaining the aim and objectives of Pharmacovigilance and its role in public health programmes, moderator of the panel discussion Dr. Mohammad Ishaq invited opening remarks from all the eminent panellists one by one. While sharing his viewpoint, Prof. K. C. Singhal presented the historical background of adverse drug reactions and pharmacovigilance in light of Thalidomide tragedy and that was followed by an overview

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of major ADRs recorded in medical history. He also underscored the need for pharmacovigilance in traditional medicine. Dr. Tripta S. Bhagat while commenting on how better health could be achieved by incorporating and integrating pharmacovigilance with public health programmes said that the lack of awareness about pharmacovigilance needs to be addressed on topmost priority in order to make this programme successful and impactful. She said that doctors and students in big and old medical colleges and hospitals too don't know much about pharmacovigilance. Dr. Tripta stated that there is a need to reach the unreached, particularly in villages and rural health centres. She expressed surprise that in spite of the National Pharmacovigilance Centre of Ghaziabad being in the vicinity of her college she was not aware about its role, responsibilities and functions till the recent past. Therefore, there is a need to create greater awareness about this WHO Collaborating Centre too.

Dr. Manoj Mittal revealed that despite having graduated from PGI Rohtak and post-graduated from RGUHS Karnataka and having served in Europe, Mauritius, and Africa for more than four years he has no shame in acknowledging the fact that despite being a physician for the last 22 years, he had never heard about Pharmacovigilance till a few months ago which projects the lack of awareness not only among common people but among trained and experienced doctors too. He emphasized that doctors don't keep any record of patient's progress and ADRs and do not share this information with anyone else. Due to lack of communication between patient and the doctor and between government regulatory agencies and the doctors which leads to lack of reporting and action on ADRs. This ultimately leads to lack of benefit to the patients. He particularly emphasized upon the sharing of data about ADRs and maintaining the patient health records system in our hospitals. Therefore, better communication of risks of medicines, involvement of all stakeholders, maintenance of records and databases, strengthening the system, sharing of information and awareness among patients are the steps needed for strengthening pharmacovigilance and integrating it with public health programmes.

Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman, National Secretary of SoPI and Professor of Pharmacology at JNMC, AMU, Aligarh while sharing his viewpoint about the topic of panel discussion said that though Pharmacovigilance is defined as the science and activity relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other possible medicine-related problems, recently its scope has been widened to include herbal, traditional and complementary medicines, blood products, biologicals, medical devices and vaccines. Dr. Rahman said that many other issues are also of relevance to the science of pharmacovigilance that include substandard medicines, medication errors, lack of efficacy, use of medicines for indications that are not approved and for which there is inadequate scientific basis, case reports of acute and chronic poisoning, assessment of medicine-related mortality, abuse and misuse of medicines, and adverse interactions of

medicines with chemicals, other medicines and foods and drinks. Dr. Rahman said that communication in Pharmacovigilance is very important apart from understanding the coding of terminology for ADRs and ATC classification of drugs.

After giving their opening remarks panellists answered several questions posed to them by the moderator. Some of the questions posed were as under:

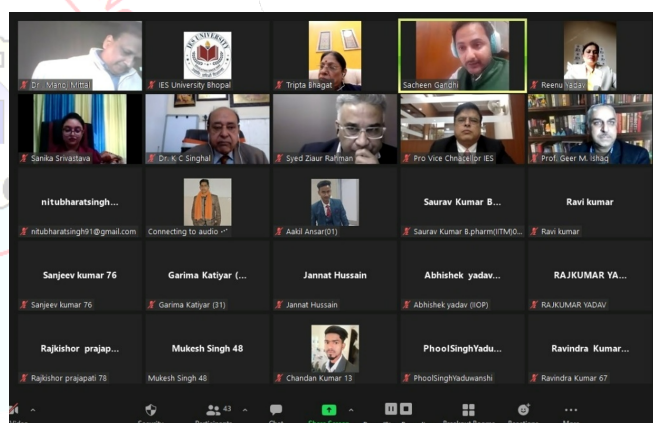
Dr. K.C. Singhal: How do you see the role of adverse drug reaction monitoring of Traditional Medicines for better public health safety?

Dr. Tripta S. Bhagat: Because of your university's proximity with IPC Ghaziabad, how do you see the role of WHO collaborating centre for pharmacovigilance in public health programmes and regulatory services?

Dr. Manoj Mittal: How Pharmacovigilance in public health ensures safe and effective use of medicines?

Dr. S. Z. Rahman: In your view, how SoPI could help in making PvPI more successful at public level?

Panel discussion was consolidated by the moderator, Dr. Mohammad Ishaq Geer with the concluding remarks of all the panellists and lastly vote of thanks was proposed by Ms. Sanika Srivastava to all the guests and panellists as also to all the participants of the panel discussion.



Profile of Panellists and Guests of Honour

Dr. K. C. Singhal: Former Vice-Chancellor, NIMS University, Jaipur and former Chairman, Dept. of Pharmacology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He did MBBS (1959 batch) and MD (1968) from King George Medical College, Lucknow; PhD (1976) from Sardar Patel Medical College, Bikaner and DSc (2001) from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He has made extensive and highly significant contributions in the field of pharmacology. He is one of the foremost pioneers in the field of Indian Pharmacovigilance and organised many scientific meets in the field of Pharmacovigilance. He founded the Society of Pharmacovigilance, India (SoPI) in 1999.

Dr. Tripta S. Bhagat: Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Santosh University, Ghaziabad (U.P), a deemed to be University. Prior to this she was working as a Professor of Surgery with Special interest in Breast Surgery and Medical Superintendent at Santosh Hospital GZB. Prof. Tripta S

Bhagat graduated and post-graduated from LLRM Medical College in General Surgery. After completing Residency in General Surgery, she worked at King Saud Medical College Abha, Saudia Arabia for 4 years. She joined as a faculty in General Surgery Santosh Hospital Ghaziabad in 1995 as Assistant Professor and became Professor in 2002, She has the distinction of being the first female Postgraduate in General Surgery in 1984 since the inception of the college in 1966 and also for being appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Santosh University Ghaziabad. Dr. Tripta has been selected for the Global Leader Award in Higher Education to be presented to her during Global Education Summit of AKS Education Awards.

Dr. Bhagavandas Rai: Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Pacific University, Udaipur (Raj.). He is the Professor and Head of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Department at Pacific. Dr. A. Bhagvandas Rai has been serving as the Dean, Faculty of Dentistry at Pacific Academy of Higher Education Research University, Udaipur since 2003. Before this, he used to work in a medical college in Karnataka. Bhagvandas did his BDS from Mangalore and later on his Masters from Bapuji Dental College in 1996. This is his 25th year in this field and his 19th year in Udaipur.

Dr. Manoj Mittal: Manoj Mittal is the Principal and Head, Dept. of Periodontology of the Bhabha College of Dental Sciences, Bhopal. He has done MDS in Periodontology. Bhabha University is a private university in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. It was established in 2018 by the Ayushmati Education and Social Society. Dr. Mittal has more than 50 publications in national and international journals of repute besides two patents and two books to his credit. He has more than 21 years of academic experience including 12 years as HOD and more than six years as Principal. His area of specialization is micro-periodontal surgery and implantology.

Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman: Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman is working as a Professor in the Dept. of Pharmacology, Aligarh Muslim University. He earned his matriculation in 1987 from Minto Circle, graduation (MBBS) in 1995 and postgraduation (MD) in 2000 from Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, and his PhD from UWS School of Medicine, University of Western Sydney, Australia. Dr. Ziaur Rehman is a permanent member of 'Board of Trustees' and Chair of the Advisory Council, International Association of Medical Colleges (IAOMC). He also serves as elected secretary of IAOMC and National Secretary of the Society of Pharmacovigilance, India (SoPI). Rahman has contributed in the area of Alternatives to animal testing and in the field of Pharmacovigilance, he gave the concept of Pharmacoenvironmentology and differentiated the term Ecopharmacology from Pharmacoenvironmentology. Rahman is a fellow and member of many national and international professional academic bodies and associations.

Mr. Sacheen Gandhi: Mr. Sacheen Gandhi is the Founder of Director of Healthcopeia Foundation, Healthcopeia Wellness Pvt. Ltd and IBH Ltd. London, UK. Healthcopeia

Foundation has always aimed to diligently work towards high quality healthcare system and improve people's health. They have been organising national and international events in the past in the field of healthcare.

Take home message

The take home message of the panel discussion was to strengthen the drug regulatory systems, improve risk communication, preserve patient medical records and databases, involve all stakeholders, enhance public participation and awareness, and allay all apprehensions and misgivings about reporting adverse drug reactions. All panellists were of the opinion to normalize reporting and recording of ADRs and integrate pharmacovigilance with all public health programmes of the country with an overall aim of maximizing benefits and minimizing harms to the patients. Panellists called for joining hands and working towards this direction in a collaborative manner so that the aims and objectives of pharmacovigilance could be achieved well in time in the country.

Earlier, IES Institute of Pharmacy organised an expert talk by Dr. Syed Ziaur Rahman, on Career guidance in the field of pharmacovigilance for the benefit of BPharm 1st and 3rd semester students on 11.12.2021. He discussed the increasing role of pharmacovigilance in drug safety and better health. He also planned for the above Vice Chancellor's Conclave with Dr. Vinod Gautham (Principal IES Pharmacy College) and Dr. Reenu Yadav (Principal IITM, Deptt. of Pharmacy, IES University).

