

# Multi-disciplinary Research to Promote Siddha System of Medicine as Evidence Based Medicine

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AYUSH systems of medicine are categorized as whole medical systems, which are complete in both theory and practice that have evolved over time in different cultures. Siddha Medicine, the science of holistic health, emphasizes on maximizing the body's inherent healing ability, addressing physical, mental and spiritual attributes of a disease and placing a strong emphasis on preventive medicine. The inventors of Siddha science / medicine – Siddhars, have pioneered research in domains pertaining to basic science, drug research and clinical medicine much before the dawn of Industrial revolution and advent of sophisticated laboratory & instrumentation technology available as on date. The role of ancient Siddhars as clinicians as well as researchers is noteworthy and commendable in facets such as philosophy, pharmacy, pharmacognosy, pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, pathology, diagnostics, nosology, omics (individualized treatment), toxicology, nanotechnology, etc. Siddhars used a ten-fold approach without any bias for full-proof evaluation and validation known as "alavai".

Research should emerge from experience in clinical practice and ideally address "effectiveness gaps", resulting from either the sub-optimal management conditions through modern biomedicine or where the use of modern biomedicine medications are expensive and/or likely to result in untoward effects. Appropriate methodologies and clinical protocols for

evaluating safety and efficacy of AYUSH systems remain vital, particularly in the case of research and evaluation of traditional procedure-based therapies like *Varmam* and *Thokkanam*. Pragmatic or whole system clinical trials (black box approach) may be better suited for AYUSH to generate evidence.

The *materia medica* of Siddha Medicine is vast and primarily uses herbal resources in the armamentarium of Siddha pharmacopoeia. 60 percentage of anticancer drugs and 75 percentage of anti-infective drugs approved in the last four decades can be traced to natural origin. Siddha arsenal includes intricacies on various inorganic pharmaceutical preparations that encompass usage of metals, minerals, animal by-products and salts with or without plant drugs. These drugs are generally acceptable for their long shelf life, minute dosage, simple palatability and most importantly for their effective results in broad range of degenerative diseases, immunological diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, etc. Natural products from traditional medicine are routinely used and hence their tolerance and safety are relatively better known. Worldwide there is an encouraging trend in favour of traditional and integrative health sciences both towards research and practice.

Siddha literatures carry information about selection of drugs, meticulous descriptions on drug processing, administration methods, and indications for various human ailments. Integrating

documented clinical experiences and experiential observations into leads by trans-disciplinary exploratory studies and further developing these into drugs or formulations through robust preclinical and clinical research will provide safer leads and evidence-based documentation.

I am thankful for the support rendered by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India for their constant guidance for this dedicated journal of Central Council for Research in Siddha. I applaud the authors of research articles for their publication in this issue. I wish that this journal is instrumental in providing scientific credence to Siddha system of Medicine.

“Much of outcomes research is a systematic attempt to exploit what is known and make it better” – Kevin Kelly.