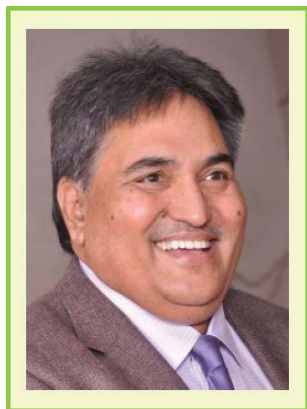




From the Patron's Desk



Personalized medicine

Personalized medicine is a multi-faceted approach in patient care, that not only improves our ability to diagnose and treat disease, but offers the potential to detect disease at an earlier stage, when it is easier to treat effectively.

Personalized medicine is the tailoring of medical treatment to the individual characteristics of each patient. The approach relies on scientific breakthroughs in our understanding of, how a person's unique molecular and genetic profile makes them susceptible to certain illness. This same research is increasing our ability to predict which medical treatments could be safe and effective for each patient, and which ones may not be.

Personalized medicine may be considered as an extension of conventional approaches in understanding and treating illness/disease. Equipped with tools that are more precise, physicians can select a therapy or treatment protocol based on a patient's genomic profile that may not only minimize harmful side effects but ensure a more successful, rapid and desired outcome. This will help in containing costs compared with a "trial-and-error" approach in disease treatment.

Personalized medicine has the potential to change the way we think about, identify and manage health problems. It is already having an exciting impact on both clinical research and patient care, and this impact will grow, as our understanding and technologies improve.

As the stakeholders work to advance personalized medicine, collaboration with government regulators and policymakers is necessary to encourage widespread use of these new tools and technologies. The regulatory process must evolve in response to advances that are targeted to smaller patient populations based on genetic profiles, and policies and legislation must be enacted that provide incentives for innovative research and adoption of new technologies. Together, progress in the research, clinical care, and policy enabling personalized medicine has great potential to improve the quality of patient care and to help contain health care costs.

Personalized medicine is rapidly having an impact on how drugs are discovered and developed; how patients are diagnosed and treated; and how health care delivery is channeling its resources to maximize patient benefits.