

Biomedical research must help alleviate human suffering: Prof Khuroo

KU's UGC-HRDC organises special lecture for refresher course participants

Srinagar, Jan 7: Renowned gastroenterologist Prof Mohammad Sultan Khuroo said on Thursday that the prime aim of biomedical research should be to save lives and to alleviate human suffering.

Addressing as lead speaker the ongoing two-week refresher course in science, organised by Kashmir University's UGC-HRDC, he said: "One of the key goals of conducting biomedical research should be to send out messages including uncovering nature's hidden secrets, saving lives and relieving human suffering and pain."

Recalling his entire journey leading to his discovery of Hepatitis-E, Prof Khuroo said that researchers must have acute vision to identify problems which cause human suffering, death and disease.

"My discovery of Hepatitis E, from the Gulmarg Kashmir Epidemic 1978-79, is a remarkable human interest story involving complexities, missteps, near-misses, and ups and downs as is the case with many similar events in history," he said, adding that the story focuses on the fact that discoveries do not necessarily require high-tech laboratories or institutions with cutting-edge research facilities but can be accomplished in a very primitive situations.

"What is needed for a researcher is the passion to uncover the truth and the aptitude to conduct oneself with ethics, dignity and respect for the system," he said.

He said the budding researchers need to do away with all myths surrounding research, and focus on excelling in doing things with innovation and novelty.

Prof Khuroo said institutional basis, funding and other financial support, team support and family support were "optional" for conducting biomedical research.

He also spoke on his discovery of Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Ascariasis as well as the Trichuris Dysentery Syndrome.

Later, Prof Khuroo answered many questions from the participants, including about the prevalence of gastric and esophageal cancers in Kashmir.

"Gastric cancers are endemic and most prevalent in Kashmir. For esophageal cancer, we have some clue that it's possibly related to dietary habits, including high carcinogens in Kashmiri tea," he said.

He said gastric cancer is related to high prevalence of helicobacter and "if we can eradicate helicobacter in the community, we will be able eradicate nearly 99 percent of gastric cancer. That is important."

Prof Khuroo said the helicobacter virulent strains are related to pathogenesis of gastric cancer and gastritis.

Earlier, in-charge Director UGC-HRDC Prof Mushtaq A Darzi welcomed Prof Khuroo and said it's the endeavour of the UGC-HRDC to facilitate interaction of college and university teachers with top-notch scientists and researchers to help them learn from their expertise.

"This sharing of knowledge is one of the key mandates of the UGC-HRDC and we are committed to fulfill it," he said.

Course Coordinator and Coordinator HRDC Dr Geer Mohammad Ishaq, who conducted proceedings of the session, said: "Today's lecture was specifically organized to guide and inspire the budding researchers of our colleges and universities to undertake high quality research within the limitations of their available infrastructure and other facilities."