

Science, Medicine and Technology Where are we Going?

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There is no other saga in the history of mankind than the saga of medicine. Indeed, there is no other profession where there is a complete fusion of science, medicine, technology and human values. It is educative and interesting to trace history of this fusion over a period of many decades. We are living in exciting times. The progress of the human race in the last 30 years has far exceeded that of the previous 300 years. Every sphere of human endeavour is witnessing gargantuan changes far beyond our expectations of even 20 years. Be it science, communications, technology, business - you name it and the scenario is changing by the year. The science fiction of robotic and electronically engineered man as we see in the movies is closer to truth than fiction. The sea change in the way we now practice medicine today is technology dependant and vastly different from the fifties and seventies. The art of medicine is being replaced by a technical craft due to progress in technology. Today's science is tomorrow's medicine. Just as technology in different fields, including medicine is

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unstoppable. The progress in the conquest over diseases and death is and will be unstoppable. While we are excited at the possibility of genetic engineering, robotic surgery and telemedicine, which may do away with doctors. The science laboratories in the advanced countries are grappling with gene manipulations to increase lifespan, prevent or defy senescence and create a genetically engineered world in which there is eternal life sans disease, sans emotions, sans sadness, where everyone lives a mechanical life.

The combined era of molecular biology and genetics from eighties to the end of the last century gave us a complete understanding of the human system in health and disease. The current era continues to educate us and signifies the importance of our close cohesion with science, politics and philosophy and helps us to coalesce human values, science and technology for a humane management of our patients. As the genius of science and medicine extends the horizon of what we can do, we are increasingly confronted by complex questions about what we should do.