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Industry seeks establishment of medical devices consortium from government

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A panel discussion held on 'Medical Devices: A story from India' at the 10th International Conference on Transforming Healthcare with Information Technology on 13th Feb



At the recently held International Health Dialogue, convened by Apollo Hospitals in New Delhi, a panel of biomedical experts deliberated upon the exisiting gap between academia and industry within the medical devices sector in India.

It is but evident that academia and industry must unite to be able to offer indigenous medical devices and reduce the country's dependency on imports. But numerous challenges are still looming which need urgent attention.

From the academic perspective, Prof Rohit Srivastava, Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay said, "We want large healthcare companies coming to IIT campuses, giving us problems, and seeking solutions. Once a product is ready, we as academicians find it difficult to get access to large patient samples, as medical devices need clinical validation."

In sync with this thought, Prof Amit Mehndiratta, Centre for Biomedical Engineering, IIT Delhi said, "Many startups are emerging from IITs but they face challenges while scaling-up. We want industry to come to us at early stage of the product development, so that pivotal studies should be done with the industry."

Dr Rajeev Gautam, President, Horiba India emphasised on the need to manufacture medical devices in India. "There is a suggestion to the government that a medical device consortium should be set up. At present, there is no platform in India where industry and academia can meet up and update each other about their recent work. This would in turn help fill the gap between industry and academia", he said.

The experts further discussed about the increasing interaction between the doctors and academicians, to better understand the need of developing new medical devices for a number of health conditions.

As a result of which, a number of doctors are now opting for a PhD in biomedical engineering in our country. " Biomedical engineering is no longer just a subject, it has become a standalone division", said Prof Mehndiratta.

Prof Renu John, Biomedical Engineering Department, IIT Hyderabad further indicated for industry's support in manufacturing new devices with the academic sector, in line with the existing regulatory framework.

Image caption- L-R- Prof Amit Mehndiratta (IIT Delhi); Prof Rohit Srivastava (IIT Bombay); Dr Rajeev Gautam (Horiba); and Prof Renu John (IIT Hyderabad)