INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

â€œFood-medicine interface need to be analysed and regulated properlyâ€

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Dr Dilip Ghosh is one of the pioneer researchers in the evaluation of the health claims opportunities of potential functional food ingredients through an evaluation of the current scientific evidence base and related claims, and provides commentary on gaps in science including potential requirements for research such as human studies. He has more than 22 years of experience in both pharmaceutical and food-nutrition industries. Dr Ghosh has published more than 60 papers in peer reviewed journals, numerous articles in food and nutrition magazines and books. His recent books, “Biotechnology in functional foods and nutraceuticals”, and “Innovation of healthy and functional foods” CRC Press has published in 2010-2012 and created serious interest in these areas. His next book, "Clinical aspects of functional foods and nutraceuticals" is in press now. In an interaction Dr Ghosh, a director at Nutriconnect, Sydney, Australia; Coordinator, Regulatory & projects, SOHO-Flordis International, Australia; Honorary Ambassador, Global Harmonization Initiative (GHI) shares his thoughts and views about the trends and regulatory issues before the nutraceuticals industry in India. Excerpts from the interaction,

What are the current trends in nutraceuticals market in India as compared to other nations in the world?

Combination dietary supplement sector is leading this industry now and would be largest growth in coming years. Multi-herbs therapy for disease prevention and control is also a new area where Indian natural medicine industries are focussing now.
Major health platforms are:

- Gut health
- Anti-ageing
- Weight management
- Energy & endurance
- Anxiety & depression

How do you see the opportunities for nutraceuticalsmarket in the coming years in India?

- Clinically proven nutraceutical and natural medicines with clinical evidence on Indian patients.

- Latest innovative products with proven health benefits with high premium are also very attractive to overseas companies.

What are major challenges the nutraceuticals industry is facing in India?

- Consistent delivery of high quality and safe products
- Unstable economic condition and devaluation of Rupees

- Gaining consumer trust on product quality and health benefits
- Consumer-pull market vs. science-driven market

How the new food safety act will help the Indian nutraceuticals industry?

It was a very bold and much-needed framework for both Indian industries as well as global companies who are in the process of entering Indian market. But due to legacy of bureaucratic system, it is still uncertain about the final outcome of this regulatory framework. I am looking with great interest how SMEs are responding to these changes. Still effective patent protection of innovative clinically proven natural medicines/nutraceuticals is a big problem in India.

I see the bright future of Indian industries who are involved with food, nutritional, nutraceutical and natural medicine’s research and development, commercialisation and marketing areas. There are few grey areas such as food-medicine interface need to be analysed and regulated properly. The regulatory scheme of non-prescription drugs is not very clear.

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