

# Editorial

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*Rajaram Nityananda, Chief Editor*

The 1960's and '70s were a heady period for medical science. It seemed that the three-pronged attack of chemical synthesis, antibiotics, and molecular biology would defeat the ancient scourges of mankind. Today's scenario is much more realistic. Progress against cancer, heart disease, and diabetes has been much slower than anticipated – or even promised – a few decades ago. Bacteria continue to develop strains resistant to new antibiotics. In this context, the 2015 Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology points in a different direction. We present two articles which remind readers that there is unexplored promise for medicine in the natural world, some of it residing in traditional practices which did not receive much attention from mainstream medicine.



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The under-representation of women in almost all branches of science worldwide has attracted much discussion. Statistical indicators of women's involvement in scientific research show that India does not do well compared to more advanced countries. While systemic approaches are being considered and implemented at the governmental level, by science academies and other bodies, it is still relevant to go back to individual women who rose high in their professions, many years ago, when the situation in terms of opportunities and attitudes was presumably worse than it is today. We carry an account of the remarkable career of the pioneering biochemist Kamala Sohonie (nee Bhagvat) which is a revelation and an inspiration. It is not just the story of a talented and determined woman who overcame the odds, but also shows her commitment to science with a direct application to the human condition in her own country. Apart from the status of women in science, reading her story also alerts us to the lower perceived status of applied science. How highly is work on lentils regarded today? On the other hand, can we eat graphene or gravitational waves?

As always, we bring you a wide variety of other subjects, ranging from counting to sand dunes, relativity to physics misconceptions, and more. The most fundamental mathematical act of counting is seen to provide valuable insights when it can be done in more than one way. And we still have two more 2015 Nobel Prizes to cover in future issues.

