



## Editorial

# Psychiatry is Biological

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“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.”

– William Shakespeare

The name might just be a convention with no meaning behind it. Strangely, though it can sometimes seem to carry a different connotation. For instance, “biomedicine” is regarded as an umbrella term to denote contemporary medical research or just the “medicine” and nothing else.<sup>[1]</sup> Some argue that the same does not apply to “biological psychiatry” and that it is one of the many branches of the big tree psychiatry. However, just like biomedicine, “biological psychiatry” and “psychiatry” ought to be used synonymously. Various domains of the often talked about – the biopsychosocial model, after all, are all integrated by the multitude of biological pathways within the brain and the body. For all the various types of determinants of mental illnesses, such as psychological, social, and environmental, the final common pathway/s has/have to be “biological” for sure.

The adjective usage of bio/biological with another term colloquially means that biology is in collaboration with the other field of science. Typical examples being biophysics, biochemistry, bioengineering, etc. Typically therefore that must mean that the term “biological psychiatry” reflects a collaboration between biology and psychiatry. However, in fact, this term is just a pleonasm, where usage of the adjective carries no added meaning. This pleonasm, that is, “biological psychiatry,” in which we argue as not just a branch of psychiatry but “psychiatry” itself, and that too in its entirety, needs more ardent reflection and of course a lot more research.

Over the past few years, there have been significant shifts in the way biological research, in general, has progressed. Physicists, mathematicians, and engineers are now involved in “biological thinking.”<sup>[2]</sup> In fact, computers are allowed to do all the thinking! There are exceptionally high amounts of funds for “high risk, high reward” research, which is driving innovative collaborations in “biomedicine.” “Interdisciplinary” is the word in vogue. Furthermore, the Indian Council for Medical Research is specifically funding research proposals under “Reproducible Artificial Intelligence in Medicine and Health.” This is “New Biology.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Moreover, the “New Biological Psychiatry” is certainly there too. The rise in the number of mobile applications in psychiatry, the use of computational modeling for neurophysiological and neuroimaging data, “big data” analyses of mental health records, etc., are the evidence. The new biological psychiatry has allowed us to think beyond descriptive psychopathology and reach the reach innovative research into omics that is paving way for the development of new milestones such as connectomics, which paved the way for newer etiological theories and the evolution of theranostics. The “New Biological Psychiatry” promises to improve diagnostic accuracy in psychiatry, which has been thought to be inherently limited by conventional methods. It

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promises to advance the development of drugs suited for the varied psychiatric symptoms. All in all, we deem that this “New Biological Psychiatry” is what will make “precision psychiatry,” where diagnostics and therapeutics are tailor-made for every individual, a reality.

Today, the bulk of psychiatric research done globally is rooted in “new biology” – psychopharmacology, neuropsychiatry, neurophysiology, neurochemistry, neuroimaging, brain stimulation (both invasive and non-invasive), etc. To the best of our knowledge, the majority of the externally funded projects as well as most of the research done as part of postgraduate/postdoctoral in psychiatry from India pertains to biological research. Surprisingly, however, authors/researchers from India often find the phrase “better suited in the more specified journal” in reply to their biological psychiatry research-based manuscript submissions in “indexed” Indian journals. The two prominent psychiatry journals from India – the Indian Journal of Psychiatry and the Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine are broad specialty journals. The space for biological psychiatry, especially for the “new biological psychiatry,” in them has only risen from “limited”<sup>[3]</sup> to “some” in the past decade or so. None of the

other journals focus specifically on biological research in psychiatry. And therefore, most of the biological psychiatry research from India is published in “non-Indian” journals,<sup>[3]</sup> many of which are not necessarily of “international” standards. Therefore, there is a strongly felt need for an Indian journal that focuses specifically on the “new biological psychiatry” in psychiatry. The journal “Archives of Biological Psychiatry” from the Indian Association of Biological Psychiatry is an exclusive entity in this regard that promise to achieve “international” standards very soon.

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