



## Special Colloquium

**18 November 2015**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Fermion**

**Speaker:**

**Dr. Santanu K. Tripathi**

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**Title:**

### **Medicines and You – Health and Medication Literacy**

**Abstract:**

Health literacy refers to the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic information and services needed to make appropriate decisions regarding their health. Health literacy in the context of medication use, i.e., the medication literacy, would mean our ability to read and understand the instructions and advices as written by our doctors in the prescription, and to read and follow the medicine labels. For some chronic ailments like hypertension or diabetes, we take medicines on a long term - taking them every day for months and years. But do we know really these medicines?

Medicines are indispensable in our life. But they are no innocuous substances. They heal and help live a better and longer life. Yet they can hurt and harm too. An informed physician can decide if and when we need a medicine, selects it out of a multitude of options, in case we need, weighs the expected benefits against the potential risks of using it, and only then prescribing the same. To get the most out of our medicines, we must follow certain rules and norms. Doctors are there to help and guide us but we have a responsibility. The success of a prescribed treatment depends much on how we comply with the instructions and advices given in the prescription. In the matter of medicine use we summarily rely on our doctors. And rightly so. But have we ever thought that being human beings, doctors can commit errors? And how dear such errors may prove on our health and life? We need to play safe with medicines. We need to be wise with them. Medicine usage seems a simple exercise. Is it really? Let us examine how enormously complex it could be.

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