

Healthcare Innovations

Subhash Chandra Parija¹, Padmavathi Shanmuganathan²

Annals of SBV (2022): 10.5005/jp-journals-10085-9119

“Make in India” is a great initiative by the Government of India to fortify innovation across the country and thereby improve the manufacturing sector with a primary motive of attracting global investors to result in an exponential growth of the Indian economy.¹ Such worthwhile innovations are protected by the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Act in India. In order to recognize the importance of IPR and to help the government’s initiative, University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed all higher education institutions (HEIs) to include IPR as an elective course with choice-based credit system (CBCS) to train the younger generations and trigger their minds toward the pathway of innovation and thus propel the country to higher standards.²

Similar to intellectual property (IP) in any other field, healthcare IP also exists in various common forms such as patents, copyrights, and trademarks. One best example of recent innovation in the healthcare sector with immense benefit to the public is the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) vaccine, which has helped society to overcome the recent pandemic. Currently, World Health Organizations (WHO) recommends eleven vaccines, and many are in the pipeline.³ In the recent past, wearable devices such as personal health-tracking devices have attracted more attention and are growing exponentially in this busy world. On the other hand, there is also a negative impact that is attributed to patenting of drugs, resulting in higher prices of newer molecules. Much research has shown that the pharmaceutical industry has received extra consideration for the existing ones to extend their period of monopoly and drastically increase the cost of these newer drugs in the market.⁴ Innovation in any field will slow down if the innovator has not benefited much from their innovation. At the same time, the primary motive of the innovations in health care should lay more focus on the benefit of the entire society rather than the profit that would be made out of the creations. Innovation, being a double-edged sword, warrants a proper patenting system to protect the innovations, as well as establishing benefits to the appropriate people.

The creator of the innovation in the form of patents is provided a period of 20 years to benefit from the innovation. However, if there is a crucial need for the patented drugs to the public, such as during any national emergency, or if the drug is not provided at a nominal cost to the people, as per the IPR act for the benefit of society, the controller of patents can provide a compulsory license to any interested person who accepts its terms and conditions and provide the product at an affordable cost to the common public.⁵

Copyrights are the most common form of IP in the healthcare system. Medical textbooks, e-learning materials, digital images, hospital management software, etc. can be copyrighted. Educating all healthcare professionals about copyright protection and ways to overcome copyright infringement is essential. They

¹Vice Chancellor, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, Puducherry, India

²Department of Pharmacology, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, Puducherry, India

Corresponding Author: Padmavathi Shanmuganathan, Department of Pharmacology, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth, Puducherry, India, Phone: +91 9842030490, e-mail: padmavathis@mgmcri.ac.in

How to cite this article: Parija SC, Shanmuganathan P. Healthcare Innovations. *Ann SBV* 2022;11(1):1–2.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None

should also know about the concept of derivative work. These are works derived from existing copyrighted material and the profit of it will be shared with the person(s) who has copyrighted the work originally.⁵

In this era of digitalization, patients find and reach healthcare services commonly either through the internet or social media. In this aspect trademarks of health-related brands will help those to identify the appropriate one easily. Trademarks help to improve the brand recognition of any newer establishment and also to enhance the opportunity for franchising. Through proper registration of health brands, trademark infringement can be prevented.⁶

In view of this, healthcare professionals, in addition to academics and patient care, should also focus on the area of healthcare innovations in order to overcome the existing issues. At the same time, they should be well aware of the laws for the protection of their innovations. Small ideas can bring revolutionary changes. The ideas are usually generated based on the needs. Hence, a healthcare professional who is working in a close relationship with patients, can identify the need precisely and bring out effective solutions for the same. Taking the few initial steps will be a tough process. However, once it starts generating ideas based on the needs, the process will become an easier pathway, and anyone can tread on it to envisage paramount success in their lives as an innovator.

REFERENCES

1. Misra SN, Ghadai SK. Make in India and challenges before education policy. *J Educ Practice* 2015;6(1):97–102.
2. The Indian Express. UGC to varsities: Offer study of IPR as elective subject. 2016. Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/education/ugc-to-varsities-offer-study-of-ipr-as-elective-subject>. Accessed date: 18 Sep 2022.
3. Mathieu E, Ritchie H, Ortiz-Ospina E, Roser M, Hasell J, Appel C, et al. A global database of COVID-19 vaccinations. *Nat Hum Behav* 2021;5(7):947–953. DOI: 10.1038/s41562-021-01122-8.

