

RESEARCH - THE TOOL FOR PROGRESS

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Evidence based medicine and innovations in medical management have been possible due to continuous research and active participation of researchers. New insights in the field of medicine have been due to the result of continuous efforts and hard work to make human lives better. The benefits are there in the form of new knowledge, drugs, medical instruments and devices. Experimental or basic medical research in the field of genetics, or clinical research in applied medicine has made many treatment modalities affordable to the common man especially for the underprivileged.¹

Research in India is in quite promising stage, despite all the odds, it is under transformation. Research, especially in medicine plays a very crucial role in the growth of a healthy nation. With the right kind of attention, a great potential of human resource in India can be utilized for innovative research. Government of India has set up a separate department of 'health and research' to promote research in the country.²

In India, there have never been an emphasis on research at primary education level or at higher educational level. Regulatory bodies of medical education also have not included research as a separate subject or developed a separate department in medical colleges, with the result doctors who pass MBBS have no training in research and they mainly join the provincial medical services for community health care. The teachers also in medical colleges lacked the instinct for research and spent their time for teaching and patient care. PhD in medical fields has not been very popular in medical colleges or even in institutes of higher learning, in contrast to developed countries. The rules that teachers have to write papers for their promotions has put pressure on teachers who are already burdened with undergraduate, postgraduate teaching and patient care. This has resulted in a mushrooming of many sites who publish poor quality papers on premium. The role of teachers in medical colleges has changed and they are expected to be well versed with information & technology skills in addition to regular teaching and patient care.³

Unfortunately, we try to follow the developed countries without creating proper infrastructure and culture for the same. Research therefore, requires a dedicated faculty who can generate new ideas, a strong infrastructure, and

financial support, with open than bureaucratic approach. It is a full time job and therefore requires separate dedicated institutes, departments with faculty who has an inclination for research to make a difference globally. Absence of research culture is a major barrier in promoting the research in medical colleges. Postgraduates in medical college submit thesis as a requirement for partial fulfillment of P.G. degree, where plagiarism is rampant and needs to be curbed. Research has to be a continuous process beyond the limitations of the classroom. Every society has its needs and accordingly the area of research should be innovative and students should have the freedom to choose the area of research. Unfortunately, number of students opting for basic research is declining due to lack of basic infrastructure, lack of grants, and career opportunities.⁴

Quality research needs high level funding, trained faculty and staff, and dedicated teams for long term results. Around the globe, two percent of industry turnover goes to research development activities, however in our country the contribution of industry for research is bare minimum and funding is mainly done by government agencies like Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Biotechnology, Science and Technology etc. Funding mainly is distributed to centrally situated research institutes because of methodology used for distribution of funds and poor writing skills of the researchers in other peripheral institutes. ICMR promotes biomedical research in the country through intramural as well as extramural research funds. Over the decades, the base of extramural research and also its strategies have been expanded by the Council for other centers, without expanding the provision of training in writing grants and availability of research infrastructure.⁵

There is a need to have a central body of researchers who should be associated with different medical colleges in a region wise or state wise manner to help making multicentric projects based on the needs and priorities of the country or the region. The contribution of India as a country, in the terms of scientific research, is bare minimal to 1.2 percent, which can be substantially increased by innovative steps. Research is a tool for progress for any country and country must take steps for catching young researchers on the line of other sports bodies

by providing them lucrative careers.⁶ Medical council of India is encouraging the medical students and teachers to do research ,without ensuring sufficient infrastructure, manpower, and funds. For making research as an alternative tool for progress, there is a need for diverse teams as collaborators, for making the dream come true.

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