

## Importance of good quality research

Fatema Jawad  
Editor-in-chief, JPMA

Research is defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as "careful or diligent search, Studious enquiry or examination especially investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws."<sup>1</sup>

Research was first known in the French language in 1577, called *recherché* from *rechercher* to go about seeking.<sup>1</sup> Since then it is the inquisitive human mind which tries to find out what is already known on a subject and what more can be added on it. Research has created new theories and brought about a revolution in various fields. The treatment of many diseases which were at one time thought to be incurable, is the fruitful result of research. The discovery of insulin in 1921 by Banting and Best was the end result of dedicated research which has saved the lives of millions of diabetics all over the world.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the discovery of Penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1928 was also due to research which initiated the era of antibiotics, a life saver for many infectious diseases.<sup>3</sup>

Research has now been inculcated into every field of science and art. Biomedical research is carried out in every country of the world, even those with low resources. This has helped in eradicating diseases as Poliomyelitis and small pox and treating morbid disorders as various cancers. It has brought about betterment for humanity related to health and quality of life.

Research has to be conducted under the umbrella of ethics and according to the pre-determined, acceptable rules formulated by the community of scientists. Once the results have been acquired, publishing them is the moral obligation of every scientist. This would disseminate the knowledge and assist other researchers to investigate further and help clinicians to give more care to the sick.<sup>4</sup>

Writing research is not only a science but also an art and it is not easy. It requires honest and hard work with patience and perseverance. Not every one is a born writer and authors can fall ill with headaches and backaches during the process of writing the research results. To help and facilitate the authors, in making publication uniform, guidelines have been formulated by journals and other international institutions of authority. This facilitates the authors and researchers in producing a good quality manuscript

It is essential for researchers to identify and select a journal for submission of the results of the research. It is also advisable to carefully read the guidelines of the journal for writing the manuscript. A frequent mistake made by the authors is not to follow the instructions which is the cause of delay in processing of the article. At times it can lead to outright rejection, if the journal receives too many articles and the editors have little patience and desire to help a needy author. It is not the editor's responsibility to re-write an article for achieving a better presentation and acceptability. An editor looks for honest research on an important topic culminating in a well written article.

Ethics in research plays an important role and begins from the conception of the idea to making a protocol, conducting the study, analyzing the results, writing the manuscript, authorship criteria, conflict of interest and finally getting it published. Following the ethical guidelines saves time and eventually the article is published with no questions on this aspect.<sup>5</sup>

The Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association (JPMA) is a biomedical, peer reviewed journal indexed with Index Medicus since 1975. It has been publishing original research articles from all fields of Medicine, Clinical and Basic Sciences. JPMA was founded in 1953 as a Quarterly and was converted to a monthly in 1957. JPMA has always worked for the betterment of the scientific community. The policy is to publish original research results This includes, Original Articles, Case Reports, Review articles, Letters to the Editor, Special communication, Short Reports, Student's research, Opinion and Debate and Problem Based Learning The final objective of this policy is to improve patient care, disperse knowledge locally and internationally, introduce new biomedical technology, improve research methodology, introduce ethical methods in research and publication and increase awareness on publication ethics.

To fulfill the objective and educate the medical community, including students, the JPMA editorial team holds workshops on Medical Writing, Research Methodology and ethical publication. For the benefit of a wider readership, we are now starting a series on "Learning Research" from the February 2012 issue. There will be an article every month on various research related topics contributed by authors from the respective fields. I look

forward to this exciting addition to JPMA which should be beneficial for the researchers of the country and abroad. This chapter will promote guidance for ethical, transparent and high quality research and eventually its publication. We also take it as a moral responsibility on ourselves to educate our juniors and undergraduate students to conduct good and honest research and then submit it for publication. This effort of writing the guidelines for good research will be a humble contribution of the journal for scientists and researchers in our country and other readers affiliated to the journal.

---

## References

1. Britannica Dictionary. (Online) (Cited 2011 Oct 9). Available from URL: [www.britannica.com/bps/dictionary/?query=research](http://www.britannica.com/bps/dictionary/?query=research).
2. Frederick Grant Banting (1891-1941), codiscoverer of insulin". JAMA 1966; 198: 660-1.
3. Fleming A. "On the antibacterial action of cultures of a penicillium, with special reference to their use in the isolation of B. influenzae". Br J Exp Pathol 1929; 10: 226-36.
4. Gasparyan AY, Banach M. A medium of science communication in our times. Arch Med Sci 2009; 5: 1-2.
5. Trochim, William M. The Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2nd Ed. (Online) 2006 Oct 20 (Cited 2011 Nov 12). Available from URL: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>.