

Academic practices and research: current scenario and remedial measures

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Madam, biomedical research is important for development and advancement of medical knowledge. Reading and writing medical literature is essential for enhancing communication, time management and critical thinking skills.¹ Several studies have been conducted in Pakistan to assess the knowledge and attitudes of our doctors towards conducting research and reading research articles.²⁻⁴ These studies indicate that in the Indo-Pak region⁵ and specially in Pakistan, the current state of healthcare research leaves a lot to be desired.

Where preference of reading source is concerned, most doctors consider books to be the primary sources of information. An interesting finding is that most doctors prefer electronic journals over their printed counterparts.⁴ A common complaint made by most doctors was high subscription charges levied on subscribers by prestigious journals. A review of literature suggests that lack of awareness with research methodologies, busy schedule, lack of experienced supervisors and lack of institutional support for subscription to paid journals which promote interest in research are the reasons most doctors do not take part in conducting researches.²⁻⁴ At the same time, however, doctors are aware about the importance of research in health care³ and show willingness to conduct research in future.²

The current situation demands that in order to produce physicians who are aware about the latest trends in medicine and healthcare, several steps should be taken. Institutional subscription to premiere journals which report studies that influence clinical practice, should be provided free of cost to all doctors and medical students. This service should be made accessible from anywhere to

ensure that the learning process of our doctors never stops. To ensure that doctors are making efforts to keep themselves updated, peer groups should be organized in the respective wards. These groups are called journal clubs, where doctors meet and discuss current articles published in journals and how they affect patient management. These have been shown to be effective in disseminating current clinical information.⁶ Mandatory attendance in such sessions will promote the quality of healthcare administered to our patients.

Senior doctors at various institutions should come forward to mentor doctors at all levels who are interested in conducting researches. The lack of acquaintance with research methodology requires that courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels be over-hauled. Faculty members from other institutions can be consulted for this process. Such an effort of re-structuring the method of instruction at these courses will go a long way in producing doctors who are interested in conducting researches and providing local epidemiological data.

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