

Patient is centre of all Medical Research

“Patient is centre of all Medical Research”, I tried to locate who has quoted this quote but couldn't find it. But I think it doesn't matter who has quoted it, we all as physicians know that patient is centre of medical universe and as a corollary he is the centre of Medical Research too. As mentioned in an earlier editorial, every effort of medical research should be to improve outcomes in our patients [1]. However when I pick up the latest issue of any journal I simply wonder if this is the case at all?

When I asked some of my orthopaedics colleagues, why they do research and why do they publish articles, the most common answer was 'for promotions and recognitions'. There were other answers like, 'I like to do research', 'It's compulsory at our institute', 'It helps me keep updated with the subject', 'It helps me develop my image amongst peers'. However I received no answer which included patients as the focus of research. Probably this reflects in what I read in a journal, there are articles that are for promotions and recognition only. There are other articles that look like they have written only because the university has made it compulsory for the authors. Other appear to have been written simply to impress. Very few articles appear to be written with patient in mind. Here I am not talking about papers on patient related outcomes. What I am trying to indicate are papers that would be really beneficial to patients and not only add to literature. Again its not like such papers are not published, however most authors when writing a paper miss out stressing enough on the patient part and simply focus on the data, statistics etc. Probably it is an issue with the scientific language or the guidelines from journals. However I definitely believe that patient centric research needs to be promoted.

We have to understand ourselves and also teach our students that research, above all, is about getting better treatment for our patients and not simply crunching numbers. Well number crunching is also an important aspect, of course. Like everything in medical science we have an objective and subjective part. The data and its analysis forms the objective part while interpretation of the data is partly subjective. I would suggest that authors add focus on patients in this subjective part and really discuss how their research will impact treatment of patients in practical ways. Authors should keep this point in mind from beginning of the study and plan accordingly. There should be an attempt to address this issue both while introducing the research and while discussing the results. This will add a bit of subjectivity to the paper which may be interpreted as authors' personal bias, but I believe readers are competent enough to distil what is appropriate for their patients. Also as discussed in a previous editorial bias is not always harmful [2]

I also believe that this idea of practical utility should be taken up by the journals also where this should be mentioned in the guidelines of the Journal. Few journals have this section on 'how the paper will add to current literature' and probably a section on 'how this paper will impact patient care can also be included'. Authors should be encouraged to share their personal experiences regarding the same and should interpret and discuss data from this point of view too. This will probably act as homage to our patients who participate in our studies. I believe every patient that participates in clinical studies also believe that this data will help develop better tools and techniques which will further help in providing better care for a fellow human being. This sense of altruism from our patients should be respected and responded too in our publications.

I think I may not be completely clear with the path this idea will take, but I am surely clear with the idea. There is a need to shift focus from the statistics and numbers towards more meaningful interpretation of the data and to keep the practical patient perspective in every article. This will definitely add more meaning to the paper and I am sure it will be of interest to

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Dr. Ashok Shyam

¹Indian Orthopaedic Research Group, Thane, India.
²Sancheti Institute for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, Pune, India

Address of Correspondence

Dr. Ashok Shyam,
Department of Orthopaedic, Sancheti Institute for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation, Pune, India.
Email: drashokshyam@gmail.com

every reader too. As journal publishers I am sure, Orthopaedic Research Group will find ways and means to further this idea in our journals and publications.

Dr. Ashok Shyam

Editor- Journal of Orthopaedic Case Reports

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2. Shyam A. Bias and the Evidence 'Biased' Medicine. J Orthop Case Rep. 2015 Jul-Sep;5(3):1-2.

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