

## What is Keeping us from Producing Good Research?

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In recent times, the quantity of research published in medical literature has increased tremendously but the quality has been on steady decline. This is specially applicable our country where we have seen poor paper being published in poor journals. So what are the reason we fail to publish good quality research from our country?

Although I have written on this topic in past too, specially in context with poor papers published in predatory journals, that is the tip of the iceberg of this problem [1,2]. The problem lies much deeper in the sense of lack of a research culture and training from the beginning of our medical training and it develops into research lethargy and ultimately research apathy. I believe it is very important for us to make policies and introduce research concepts and methodologies much earlier in the medical curriculum. Research and reading of journals should be introduced in the first year of medical college. Students have to be made aware of anatomy, physiology and biochemistry journals and should be given review articles on important topics to read. Reading journals will not only make them understand basic principles of research and review articles but will also make them well versed with format of the article and how to search and cite other scientific works. One of the major problems that I see in being on editorial board of state journals is plagiarism. A lot of these plagiarism is what we can call as stemming from ignorance. The student author most of the time don't realize that they have to reference all the citations that they take from any paper. If there is a habit of reading journals and understanding journal formats, they will try to avoid these mistakes. I believe regular journal clubs should be held month starting from first year of medical college and all subjects must insist that students read journal articles. Specially in third year, reading journals should be more stressed upon than on relying completely on text books. In internship, a small research project should be made mandatory for all the interns. This can be taken under the Preventive and social medicine department. Many of the post graduate residents that join us have never done any research project in past and it is very difficult for them to write their synopsis or even set up their proformas. A continued research education at undergraduate level will immensely help in solving this problem

Another reason why we fail to produce good research even though we have the best of data, it lack of guidance on how to proceed with a research project. Like mentioned, most of us have never done a research project properly and are not at all trained in designing studies and research protocols. This seems very difficult to someone who has never done it. I meet many surgeons who are doing excellent work, however most of them lack basic knowledge of research and paper writing. This is one of the main reasons why we are not producing good research even though we have one of the best and largest data banks. In fact, every institute and every orthopaedic surgeon is a data bank which can easily produce multiple scientific papers. In our conferences there many posters and papers that are presented which are good papers and have great concepts. But more than 90% of it doesn't get published in peer reviewed journal. A lot of time I have asked these speakers about

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publishing their work, their main limitation is in writing a full manuscript. They can easily make a power point presentation but find it extremely difficult in writing a full manuscript. A focused research education through lectures and workshops can address this problem to some extent however research education starting from first year of medical curriculum will completely avoid this problem.

Research method should be taught to students as they are taught the Clinical methods. Research knowledge is as important to a future clinician as are his clinical skills. The research knowledge will not only help him write a paper but will also help in reading a paper and extracting useful information for clinical use from the literature. However, this doesn't mean that we can't acquire this knowledge later and there are many examples to that. There are quite a few surgeons who are knee learners and have learnt research principles and write very good manuscript. But these are exceptions and although they produce good literature, it doesn't solve the issue of a large majority that cannot conduct a good study.

The best solution to improve the quality of research is inculcation of research culture and development of research mentors. Only when both these are achieved, the quality of research will improve.

## References

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