

Research - Make in India?

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Medicine, like any other scientific field depends very much on scientific journals for dissemination and enhancement. There was a time when publishing was considered an instrument to enhance one's familiarity within the medical fraternity. Publishing a scientific article has now become a mandatory requirement for enhancing one's own position in the career ladder. The statement, 'publish or perish' remains true in today's world of medical teachers. Career progression is often withheld and this compulsion to publish is often seen as a necessary evil. The true need for good and useful scientific publishing is thus lost on the young people. The compulsion results in many articles that are published being incomplete, inappropriate, inept and inconclusive. Plagiarism is rampant as is publishing in multiple journals. 'Pay and publish' is another offshoot of this need.

The current medical knowledge has been a result of years of toiling and observation. Such knowledge cannot be static since there are always unanswered questions that need further investigation. New problems and diseases are discovered as also new ideas and solutions. They must be shared so that science can advance.

Scientific writing is a skill that needs to be ingrained in to the young doctors and medical professionals. The spirit of research with its inquisitiveness, raising relevant scientific questions, doing a wide literature search, designing good and unbiased

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methodology, conducting honest research, ensuring good observation of ethics, critical analysis of results and then putting it together in a coherent manner should all be assimilated by the researcher. The result of such research when published would then be a joy to publish and a delight to read.

India is a large country with more than a billion people. We have a large variety of disease conditions, and a large number of medical teachers. The Indian patients generally are more stoic and trust their doctors. Research is easier to conduct in India and we are likely to find willing people to participate. This definitely must encourage the researchers. Publication is an after-math of research. This must be done to let the world benefit from the findings of that research. Apart from original articles, there is always a place for case reports of rare cases, audits, surveys and review articles.

When an important question arises in our minds, we often seek answers in the Western literature. We believe they are true, their research is well conducted and they are reliable. Dishonest research and publication have the possibility of doing harm to the patients. Often, young doctors tend to believe that all that is published to be true and immediately apply it into their clinical practice. It can also divert attention from reality. Statistics is often a play of numbers and can be manipulated to achieve the desired results. All such research and publication should be condemned. A proactive ethical committee must screen all the studies to ensure safety of the patients that undergo this research.

There are a few well-known Indian authors who do publish regularly and there are a few indian journals which are maintaining international standards but

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there is a scope for many more. Considering the amount of clinical material available in our country as also the number of teaching institutions, there is a definite possibility of enhancing the research output. The need of the hour is a change in attitude, to shed any inertia and wake up that drive within us to create knowledge. We must have less reliance on western literature and be able to garner more support from governmental and private bodies favouring research. We are a capable people and we can certainly achieve this, if we can spare some time

and effort to do so. There is plenty of evidence of enormous contribution ancient Indians have made to the world in the field of medicine. We need to now concentrate on modern medicine. The current environment is echoing with the slogan, 'Make in India'. This should not be limited to the industry but can be applied to the scientific literature also. It is time we produce our own literature that is very reliable, trust-worthy, well-conducted and *at par* with the developed world.