

Publication does not necessarily mean Research

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The scope of research in medicine is everlasting. New drugs, tests, methods, skills, technology and ideas will keep on emerging and the practice of medicine will keep on widening its scope. But it is also true that in the recent past the quest for knowledge and research has been substituted by that for publications. For example this editorial is not going to add anything to existing knowledge but it will be considered as a publication. In India the majority of publications are a result of MD/MS/ MCh/ DM thesis and very little result from actually dedicated projects intended and formulated to study a particular topic. These theses are completed over varying periods mostly ranging from 6 months to 2 years. Large trials which continue over 5-10 years are almost non-existent in India. With the existing system of selection and promotion, in Government medical colleges and institutes, there is overemphasis on publications for academic jobs and promotions (Verma et al). Quantity has become the focus and not quality. Most of the research is either based on refurbished or complex ideas which may not be applicable in general practice or on larger population. Another important issue is Plagiarism. Although evidence of established Plagiarism is less but an increased demand of publications (with increase in number of journals) may be treated as a risk factor for plagiarism. Therefore, it is time for developing country like ours to concentrate on "Translational research". Simple ideas which can be put into practice for the benefit of larger population or conservation of resources need to be stressed upon.

A new concept that has become established with the publication industry is that of "Publication fee". Post graduate students and some researchers find an easy way out with these kinds of journals. Verma et al in their study of dental professionals revealed that more than 20% of doctors who responded to their survey had published in "paid journals" and >10% professors who participated in the survey didn't know about plagiarism.¹

A survey of healthcare providers in ten countries (China, Ghana, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Laos, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal and Tanzania) concluded that "Locally conducted or published research play an important role in changing the professional practice of health care providers in low and middle income countries".²

Therefore it only seems appropriate for a developing nation like ours to focus on locally conducted research to achieve results which could be translated into practice and will be applicable for a larger population.

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