

Management of research in dental science

Sir,

In his editorial on the intricacies of research, Ramesh rightly pointed out that in the Indian dental education system the approach toward research should be changed.^[1] Proper management of dental research at different levels should be initiated. In India, exposure to research in the dental profession is generally only during the dissertation work that is done to fulfil the requirements of the Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) program. The purpose of dissertation in the postgraduate curriculum is to expose the students to the research environment, but the spirit seems to evaporate after thesis submission.^[2] Only a small number of dental professionals opt for a full-time research career in India as compared to Western countries.^[3]

Globally, dental research has made remarkable contributions toward the development of newer technologies and improvements in dental equipment, materials, and pharmacological and diagnostic products.^[3] Thrust areas in research vary for different countries, depending upon the pattern of disease burden and socioeconomic conditions. In India, tobacco-associated diseases need relatively more attention, followed by periodontal disease, dental caries, and dental fluorosis.^[4] Research in dentistry in India should not remain only on paper and publications or be restricted to the laboratory, without having any clinical significance and without being beneficial to the patients and the public at large.^[3]

Considering this situation, it is time to establish an Indian Council of Dental Research (ICDR). As a first step, a separate wing within the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) should start functioning for research in oral health and dental science. Currently, very few undergraduate dental students are encouraged to take up research projects.^[2] This situation can be reversed by providing short-term scholarship (STS) to them for undertaking extracurricular research, just as MBBS students are provided such opportunities by the ICMR. The basics of research can be introduced in the undergraduate Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) curriculum, which will be very useful for dissertation work during the MDS program.^[3] At the postgraduate level, the proposed ICDR can formulate research protocols that can be divided into smaller parts and be used for MDS dissertation work in various institutions. To help dental professionals to pursue a full-time research career and to help institutions to employ persons having PhD qualification in future, the introduction of a doctoral program in dentistry is essential and should be set up with guidance from the Dental Council of India.^[3] Moreover, the proposed ICDR can formulate guidelines for the ethical

conduct of research, multicentric trials, clinical research, and extramural research, and arrange for necessary funds for the research projects. The quality of research can be enhanced by providing incentives to teachers and students of dentistry for publication of articles in journals with high impact factor.

Samir Mallick

Department of Commerce, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, India
E-mail: samirmallick@yahoo.co.in

REFERENCES

1. Ramesh V. The intricacies of research work. *Indian J Dent Res* 2010;21:467.
2. Pillai J. Dental research: Some bitter aspects. *Indian J Dent Res* 2009;20:519.
3. Sivapathasundharam B. Research career in dentistry. *Indian J Dent Res* 2009;20:255.
4. Rahmatulla M. Vision and challenges for dental research worker. *Indian J Dent Res* 2009;20:135.

Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijdr.in
	DOI: 10.4103/0970-9290.114929