Pakistan had inherited the British medical education system and it is prevailing here since 1947. At that time it had only two medical colleges; sixty-eight years later, the number of medical colleges has increased to about 156, of which currently 94 are recognized by Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC). Although numerically the nation has done well, the quality has seriously suffered. It is still unfortunate that we failed to produce an atmosphere in our medical colleges where even teachers lack confidence in writing a research project. Unfortunately neither funding agencies nor major programs of medical sciences are interested in medical research programs.

Research plays a most important and integral part in the advancement of the field of medicine. It was since independence that the increasing need of research and development in the country was felt, but unfortunately this field kept being neglected and remained in its worse shape. A number of reasons can be cited for the poor state of medical research in Pakistan. Medical students in Pakistan follow the system of case history and case studies. Reporting of diseases and documenting the cure for them was thought to be the highest level medical activity. It was in 1968 when few researchers of Pakistan thought to undertake medical research at a larger scale; this was the time when researchers got interested to incorporate biostatistics in their medical courses.

Medicine continues to attract the best brains of the country. A fair number of medical students are also interested in research as is evident from a number of undergraduate publications not only nationally but internationally. Similarly establishing a lot of medical student research journals, increases the interest of medical students in publishing their own manuscripts. Continuation of such high interest of students in Medical Students’ Research, can improve the situation. It is worth mentioning that though the need of Undergraduate Medical Research (UGMR) is highlighted at a number of occasions but Pakistan Medical & Dental Council fails to provide the deserving credit to UGMR in medical curriculum. Not many institutes except some like Agha Khan Medical College, Shifa International Medical College, Peshawar Medical College, Rehman Medical College, etc. facilitate under graduate students in conduction of research and getting their work published. Even in the medical schools where UGMR exists in practical sense, the time table did not contain any credit hours to promote research activities.

Since last two decades, tremendous advancements have been shown in the field of medical research and a number of valuable research articles have been published in indexed journals of the country. According to a report on the number of publications from 2007-2010, the total publications from all medical universities and colleges affiliated with medical colleges in Pakistan was 5886. These are several indicators to show that future is bright. This is perhaps the most opportune time to develop and strengthen the concept of “Research oriented medical education”. As reported in a national newspaper in June, 2013 Pakistan is producing more research papers per capita than India and if the frequency continued then by 2018 Pakistan will be producing more papers as compared to Singapore, Thailand and India and will be leading Asia in publishing research.
work. It is time that we think of “Research training” as an integral part of the MBBS curricula by introducing a proper and 5 year course of medical research exposure, as a regular part of MBBS syllabus. It should be stressed to the students that the modern doctor will be recognized on the basis of research output and publications, rather than routine syllabus and clinical work. The future of professionalism would be closer to that of true medical scientists as compared to empirical domains of alternate medical practitioners. In addition, UG medical research experience and publications in their hands can increase their job market value.

Rehman Medical College is among the medical colleges in KP which provides proper exposure to the UGMR; experience of this five year medical course as supervised research projects lets a number of medical students publish their research work in their undergraduate life. This helped the students to polish their research skills and allowed the Department of Medical Research to recruit additional faculty as research supervisors. For the first time ever, six UG research projects from Rehman Medical College were selected to be presented at the Khyber Medical University (KMU) Annual Health Research Conference held in February, 2012. This was a first ever presentation by students and it was widely appreciated by the KMU and the RMC. Presenters and all team members were given appreciation certificates by the DMR. The trend has continued annually since then with RMC students bagging prizes and awards regularly. It speaks well of the enthusiasm of medical students for research and goes to show that given the opportunity and resources, our students are no less than students from developed nations.

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