

Editorial

Building a health research culture in Nepal: An initiative from the Institute of Medicine

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Introduction

Research culture is one of the essential components of the health research and it should be established in all academic institutions. Research culture is to be an integral part of medical education, so that the graduate can contribute to the science. Institute of Medicine (IOM), the premier medical school in Nepal, has been playing an important role to establish health research culture from its inception. However, we have yet to achieve a lot which is akin to climbing new mountains in harsh weather!

If we make a record of our work, we initiate the research. Analyzing and reporting of our work is, in fact, a research. Research is a systematic investigative process to discover information/knowledge in any field. All modern medicines and surgical techniques would not have developed without health research. Moreover, health research saves lives directly or indirectly. In general, health research needs three components (3C); culture, competency and capacity. Research culture is the most important factor to uplift the research activity particularly in the developing countries like Nepal.

Research Culture in Institute of Medicine

As a premier medical school in Nepal, medical education and health research was initiated from the IOM under Tribhuvan University in 1972. The undergraduate program, MBBS was started as a community oriented integrated program in 1978.¹ Each medical student has to be oriented to research work during community field posting. A group report is submitted for evaluation. This is the foundation of the research culture in our medical education system. Some of our students write

research article during their study period.² At present, there are nine other undergraduate academic programs in the IOM.

The first postgraduate (PG) course of the Institute of Medicine was started as MD General Practice in 1982. At present, we have 49 PG programs including super speciality courses like DM/MCh and PhD under Medicine, Nursing and Ayurveda faculties of the IOM. Every PG resident has to do research work after getting through his/her research proposal from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the IOM. A thesis/dissertation approval by the external expert is mandatory for the completion of the course. Most of these works are published in medical journals.

The majority of health research has been carried out by individual faculty researchers in their areas of interest.³ There are 31 academic Departments in the IOM. Each department can get research grant from the Research Department depending on the research proposals. One particular Department merits special mention. With the collaboration of the various international organizations, Child Health Research Project of the Department of Pediatrics has successfully completed some important clinical trials on Zinc for the treatment of diarrhea and pneumonia.⁴

Research Grants and Monitoring Body

Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC): is an apex body under the Ministry of Health to promote and monitor all health researches in Nepal. It is also responsible for policy formation and priority setting for health research. It promotes a research culture and develops partnership and networking with national and international institutions. NHRC provides research grants to the researchers.⁵

University Grant Commission (UGC): provides research grants to the institution or faculty researchers. It also supports PG student researchers in order to promote the research culture and innovation in the country.⁶

Journal of Institute of Medicine (JIOM)

Being a pioneer medical institute in Nepal, IOM has been bringing out its official publication since 1979. JIOM is one of the oldest medical journals in the country. It is a peer reviewed open access journal, which is published quarterly. It motivates our researchers to publish their works in the journal.

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