

# Medical Research : A Neglected Issue in Bangladesh

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“I need help! Could you please add my name as co-author in your next paper? I require three papers as a prerequisite of my next promotion!”

The above quote reflects the present scenario of our research activity and its importance in Bangladesh among health professionals. In our country, medical and clinical research activities are in a very primitive stage.<sup>1</sup> Research Methodology and Biostatistics are included in the undergraduate courses curriculum but with a very limited teaching hour and syllabus. The research involvement of medical students starts actually during their higher postgraduate study. Students need to prepare a dissertation or thesis for post-graduation like MPhil, MPH, FCPS or MD/MS. They need to do a thesis or dissertation as a course requirement. But most of the time, it is done unscientific and dishonestly and as a result, their research works are not fit for publication in an Index journal. Most of the time, students prepared it from professional people on a contract basis. Their assigned supervisors are not motivated to guide their students and remain busy with patient care and management issues. While defending the thesis or dissertation, it is overlooked and students pass, and when they become the supervisor, the same thing happens to the new students - a vicious circle continues.<sup>2</sup>

Post-graduation like Ph.D. can make a student more research-minded. The course of Ph.D. is such that in its entire duration, basics of research and pros and cons of research works needed to know by the student and they need to do a thesis more extensively. But in Bangladesh, a Ph.D. as a degree is not positively entertained by the medical colleges or universities. They used to say it is not a clinical degree, so patients will not be benefited. So there are very minimum Ph.D. holders. As a result, medical students are deprived of learning the lights of trained researchers.

So, we can see that our pipeline of researcher production is poor. These affect the overall research work of the clinical field of Bangladesh. Even with all these difficulties, some people try to research. As the publication is needed for up-gradation and promotion, people also try to do that by themselves. But their activities are not up to the mark, and different weaknesses are reflected in their careers. Protocol preparation, stickiness to ethical issues, data collection, data analysis, and report writing and submission all these stages of research need the utmost honesty to have a good quality scientific paper. But as we are poorly grown, weakness is reflected in our works most of the time.

In total there are 155 Medical and Dental Journals recognized by the Bangladesh Medical & Dental Council (BM&DC). However, very few journals are indexed in PubMed, Scopus or Web of science. So our researchers have not exposed the requirements of those indexed houses. Our institutions of publishing journals don't care about the prerequisites to be indexed with those platforms. Banglajol, supported by INASP, is a platform with which medical and other journal publishing houses are attached for their online publishing. Banglajol takes the annual charges and publishes the paper online only. So quality assurance and quality maintenance entirely depend on the institutions' journal editors.

The average acceptance rate for journals indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus is 35% and 40%.<sup>3</sup> The most essential prerequisite for the acceptance for an international indexed journal recognized by PubMed, Scopus, or Web of Science, the manuscript should be presented in an intelligible fashion and written in standard English. The language in submitted articles must be clear, correct, and unambiguous. The submitted paper should be sound typographically or grammatically. Next, the issues of scientific values are evaluated. We used to do cross-sectional and observational studies, which most of the time did not meet the scientific criteria of those journals and were rejected somehow.

Again, when a paper is sent to peer review, the question of data integrity and honesty comes, which is another area of potential rejection. Again there are substandard funding opportunities for the new researchers. For that field of research have weak growth.

Nevertheless, some of our researchers try to do their best in clinical research fields. They have lots of papers published in indexed journals. We need to improve ourselves to avoid rejections. We should be sticky with the authors' requirements of the submitting journals and try to keep our honesty while researching every aspect. Only then can we avoid frequent rejection, and success will come in our grips.

## REFERENCES

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