The need for an undergraduate medical students’ research journal

The Medical Council of India stipulates that in addition to duration of experience, publications of 'Research papers' in MCI approved journals are mandatory for the promotion of faculty in the medical Education System.1,2 Not surprisingly, for most, academic promotions become the sole incentive for research. Research turns out to be half hearted, inaccurate and often published in predatory journals.

Interest in research needs to be implanted in the minds of medical students early in their lives so as to enhance their critical thinking and sensitise them to health related issues.3 As it stands today, research among medical doctors in Asia are mediocre with India making a meagre contribution to the existing body of literature.4 The situation can only be reversed if there is an increase in research interest among medical students during the initial days of their training so that they may carry forward their interest during the later years of their career.

The first opportunity for serious research for the medical students during their curriculum is through the performance of the project under community medicine in the 4th/5th semester of their training. Although done on a small scale it incorporates all the components of a major research including the writing up of the final project and presentation. From our experience as faculty members and researchers we have seen that the single most important incentive for students to undertake serious research is a chance to see their projects getting published in scientific journals. However, the scope of publishing projects in journals of repute is limited due to the fact that the studies undertaken during this period are small because of limited time and resources. Also, most journals do not publish names of more than 6 authors and accommodating all the students as authors becomes impossible.

To overcome these challenges, we have undertaken to publish a research journal whose main objective is to provide a platform for the undergraduate students for publication and wider dissemination of their work. The journal will also provide them with an opportunity to learn to write original articles, reviews, case reports, and other articles for medical journals. This will help nurture in them the spirit of research and prepare them as post graduate trainees and future faculty members of the medical colleges.

Although, we start off our journey today, primarily as a journal of North Bengal Medical College, in future we would like to see the journal become a resource for publication of quality research work for undergraduate students from all over West Bengal and India. In time the journal should be able to attract research papers from medical students outside India. Hope this journal can live up to the high standards it attempts to achieve.

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References