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Reflection on mandatory training workshop for intern doctors on "Research, Writing and Publication" at Patan Academy of Health Sciences, Nepal

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Research is a very general term for an activity that involves to 'find out', in a more or less systematic way. A more academic interpretation of research involves 'finding out new things or information'. It is about advancing the frontiers of knowledge. Preparing medical graduates to contribute to medical science, prepare them for their better professional life and career growth are crucial steps taken by medical schools. As a layperson, there is no difference between a magazine like 'Massage & Bodywork' bimonthly publication for audience on massage, bodywork and somatic professionals; unlike the scholarly scientific publication of 'The Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies'. There are many options available as to which source one should look for references, for example, blogs, commercial/business promotion publications, and vast amount of information available online. The issue of ethical and valid information requires careful scrutiny to serve the desired purpose. Scholarly scientific journals adhere to rigorous standards, usually require Ethical Committee/ Institutional Review Committee (IRC) or Institutional Review Board (IRB), to approve the study proposal, and later the Journal Editorial Board follow rigorous review, including research and publication ethics and norms.

The Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS), a health science university (www.pahs.edu.np) has adopted a curriculum which includes many important trainings workshops on skill development in various clinical disciplines during clinical years. The IRC-PAHS (<http://www.pahs.edu.np/pahs-community/institutional-review-committee/>) and Journal of PAHS (JPAHS) (<http://jpahs.edu.np/index.php/JPAHS/about/index>), has introduced the mandatory training workshop for the interns of school of medicine of PAHS to complete the on-hand one day authors training workshop 'module-1' on 'how to write and publish in scientific journals', in collaboration with Nepal Association of Medical Editors (NAME). This workshop program refreshed my knowledge on study designs, and how to write for journals, beginning from title to the references.

For intern medical doctors, this workshop explained about the importance

of research, and giving providing on-hand clear understanding on the process regarding where and how to publish a research. This I found out was really helpful to encourage the young doctors on writing a scientific article. Though this was a concise program of one day (8 am – 5 pm), it provided us with the knowledge and skills of writing and publishing in scientific journals. This program was comprehensive and divided into separate section like overview on ‘research and publication’ by the editor-in-chief of JPAHS and chair of IRC-PAHS, followed by series of separate topics by the IRC-PAHS team, from title to the references. The session on writing a research title and authorship, writing introduction, methodology, creating objective for research, finding results of particular research and the way of expressing into a research article were very crucial for us, the medical interns. Such initiatives are not just for medical interns but I think this will improvise our academic career in the future, the academic ladder, for example, to obtain the academic posts of lecturer, assistant professors, associate professor, professor, etc. Today’s interns will move on this hierarchy in future and provide mentorship, like we have had during this workshop to train us for research and academic writing. Thus, we are more motivated to train ourselves for the need of better mentor and a clinician to practice evidences based medicine in the future. To build a culture of research, writing and publication of academic papers, exposure from lower levels of medical education like medical students and interns, is crucial. The phrase “doing best of science in very scientific way” that I learned through this training was really helpful, for all of the medical professionals to contribute for advancement of medicine.

This on-hand training workshop for intern doctors provided us a structured, guided training to write a research paper with logical discussion, and conclusion that match the objective. How and why to write acknowledgement and knowhow of expressing the conflict of interest was new for us. This also gave us idea about writing references and its importance while writing a scientific paper. More interestingly, they were able to provide

us on-hand practical, as group discussion sessions in between the lectures, and this was really helpful.

We came to know about the benefits of writing a paper for scientific journal and also became aware about misconducts in research, writing and publication, the serious issues of falsification and fabrication of data, copy and pasting i.e. ‘plagiarism’. We got a brief ideas on right and wrong ways for conducting a research. Furthermore, Prof. Jay N Shah, the chair of ethical committee, the institutional review committee of PAHS (IRC-PAHS) and chief editor of Journal of PAHS (JPAHS), stated that their generation of doctors were not trained formally or introduced to the art of writing a research article of 4-5 pages, even though the universities demand to produce research thesis of hundred pages as academic requirements during postgraduate courses. This made us appreciate the opportunity even more, such program being in-built in PAHS undergraduate curriculum, to provide the interns an interactive, structured training workshop to prepare us as an author for writing and publication in scientific journals. This will save us from the struggle of having to learn through ‘trial and error’ of writing and publishing in scientific journals.

While in older times, writing a research article was a task pursued by postgraduates, inculcating this into the medical school internship curricula can strengthen the knowledge and skills, providing a much needed stepping stone for medical graduates to write and publish research articles. The training also served as a form of encouragement and helped in eliminating pre-conceived notions about the difficulties of writing and publishing articles in scientific journals. By exposing us to a ‘modified flawed’ research article during practical group work, the felicitators, tactfully provided us the skills of how to critically read and review research articles. This training workshop provided us with the knowledge and skill, in a way that will stay in our memory through our professional life. Such training workshop should be in-built in the curriculum of all the medical schools.