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Research Mentorship for Young Health Science Students of Nepal

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Evidence-based healthcare practice is an emerging trend to provide quality healthcare. Such evidence is synthesized through research. In the current context, the young health science students indulge mostly in acquiring academics and clinical skills. Research as part of learning is given less importance despite having it in the course curricula. The gained knowledge in research is traditional and theoretical based, that emphasized upon completion of course objectives rather than being practical. Healthcare providers having critical thinking, better judgement and decision-making skills could only provide quality care which can be adopted by continuous research learning and practicing. This basis is supported by several studies.^{1,2} Research learning is one of the processes that helps develop a critical thinker and enhance evidence-based practice.

On the positive paradigm, we ought to see students being enthusiastic and motivated to study and conduct research activities. They are searching for good mentors for good research guidance. While on another aspect they lack support, encouragement and enabling environment thus failing to translate their research interest into real research work. A mentorship program is instrumental for the effective and efficient guidance of young students.^{3,4} The concept of the mentor-mentee relationship is for the creation of a better bond between learner and teacher. The continuous monitoring and guidance of young students through mentorship have success stories of achieving personal and professional development. The mentor-mentee relationship promotes a research culture and has proven benefit in better portfolio development of students, but the concept of mentor-mentee relationship in health sciences academia is just emerging. This concept was often overlooked in the previous generation and they still hesitate to internalize and accept the concept of mentor-mentee in research.

Globalization in health care demands evidence-based practice, best technology and best services to the people. It brings advancement and development along with its challenges as well. Hence, it is of utmost importance to prepare students beforehand to overcome those future challenges and it is best possible through development of research culture. The constant mentorship of young health science students in research activities will help them to learn, conduct, and synthesize the research evidence and practice culturally accepted evidenced based care.

Many health sciences students interested in learning research get frustrated searching for a good mentor. The lack of research culture in academia further challenges the concept of mentorship-based research learning and is often neglected. Unlike in other fields, the timing is now to advocate the concept of research mentorship program in health academia. We need to shift from our traditional teaching learning process to modern concepts.

For this, the faculties at first need to accept this concept of research mentorship for better transfer of research skills to young health science students. They themselves need to be well prepared for this initiative. Second, the academia should also work to develop the policies related to research mentorship programs. Third, the research which is the basis for evidence based practice needs to be incorporated in the organizational goal. Fourth, the health curriculum needs to be upgraded with inclusion of this initiative. The organization, academia, faculties and curricula needs to be well prepared to initiate and sustain the concept of research mentorship program.

The young health sciences students have a significant role to bring into practice of research environment in their course curricula. They ought to proactively act on searching for a good mentor. Selection of a good mentor is a first step in research learning. They can witness their faculties, who are actively involved in research activities. They can approach them showing their interest to learn research. Effective research consumes time and there is no early outcome, no direct financial benefits but can form the basis for professional development and synthesis of tools, guidelines and protocols in community and clinical practice. This is a pure scholarly work which needs students' patience, perseverance, strong commitment, dedication, mindfulness, accountability, responsibility and strong communication skills.

Through the mentorship programme, students learn how to communicate for better data collection, data entry, data synthesis, proposal writing, research ethics, basic statistics, gantt chart preparation, referencing, citation etc. They can start their research career as a team member of the main investigator following their faculties. This eventually helps them to conduct research independently as the main investigator.

Research requires a group effort from a multidisciplinary team and it can't be performed independently on a seclusion. We need to favor group work for more effective and efficient research learning and execution of research activities. The hectic course of health science studies further challenges the time management of the health science students. But the students have to search for their effective time to indulge themselves in research learning.

It should be initiated now for future evidence-based healthcare practice within the country and abroad. All the stakeholders need to consider this concept seriously. The constant advocacy from all the like-minded people will be beneficial in future.

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