From Research to Publication in Psychiatry

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There are many reasons why we do research. Be it observational, naturalistic or experimental study, we aim to look for the answers of our research questions. Research allows us to pursue our interests, to learn something new, to improve our problem-solving skills and to challenge ourselves in new ways. This is the basis of our clinical practise in psychiatry as well as in medicine in general.

According to the 2000 Nobel Prize winner, Eric R. Kandel "The idea right now is to take advantage of the enormous increase in knowledge in the biological basis of behavior, such as imaging methodology and the human genome," he says. "Psychiatry, in principle, is going to be in a wonderful position to profit from this."

A significant number of research in psychiatry is conducted in the developing countries, including in Malaysia. Most of the academic institutions expected their postgraduates in psychiatric training to conduct research as the full or partial requirement to be awarded a degree. The expectation is even more for the psychiatric academics. The outputs from research are expected to be published.

Why do we publish? Of course, there are many reasons. However the basic fundamental is to transfer the new findings or scientific information to other people. If we don’t publish our scientific results, it indicates two possibilities: research is not finished or is finished but unsuccessfully. A retrospective survey of articles published in the BMJ, Lancet, NEJM, Annals of Internal Medicine & JAMA in a calendar year found only 6.5% the contribution of the developing world to medical literature. Many obstacles to be overcome by the researchers in developing countries may include lack of research funding, inadequate facilities, limited technical support and inadequate training. Some may have completed their research but the outputs are not published. Fear of rejection by the journals due to English language problem, a lack of the culture of publication, competing clinical commitments, are some of the unseen barriers facing developing country researchers.

These may be similarly happening in psychiatry in Malaysia. There are several research projects conducted every year particularly in the universities but the amount of publication is still small. These are the challenges we have to face and collaborating work should be encouraged to do research, to complete it and to publish.

References


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