

Medical residents: Research and publication priorities/confusions

Dear editor,

We read with great interest the article “Addressing research barriers and facilitators in medical Residency” by Nair *et al.*^[1] The authors have shown that the medical resident interests were high in research with the response that it will enhance their critical thinking and to learn medicine in an evidence-based way.

In streamline with the topic discussed, I tried to add certain other important area that was questioned by the medical resident with respect to research and its dissemination to the scientific community.

As everyone is aware about the fact that when once the researched area is completed, publication is mandatory for the proper implementation or to enhance the knowledge in the current field.

Because research is not only publishing work as the original article, but also getting involved in other aspects of scientific thinking and exposing their ideas for the betterment of research being done.

In case of research work like a thesis or project by the resident, the dissemination is straight as they can publish directly under original article or the brief report as per their studies fit. But the real competitive world expectation is high from the resident that too maximum if a medical resident graduates from an institute of national importance. The matter of publishing with or without fee is another determination. These issues are already discussed in detail by Bhattacharya *et al.*^[2] Most of the queries raised were related to the various categories of publication, and their weightage during their career as researcher, academician, or clinician. The residents were also confused on the publication and its number. As a resident or postgraduate, they can maximum handle one research (as their academic thesis) or a small project (secondary database in most cases or few case reports). Therefore, while they finish, they might have a maximum of 2-3 works or few with publication.

Other side, few residents were interested to go more than this number, as they were aware about the fact of the importance of publication even before entering into a medical residency based on their family medical background or awareness through other possible means. They also do not want their critical thinking to be wasted. Hence, they look all the possible way to get things published to survive in the competitive world.

Therefore, their big question is “what to submit, where to submit, and how to get published.” The category of submission is also again a debatable topic, at least in the case of postgraduate who were not having much budgetary support but need good publication through their hard work. In case of medical residency or graduate, Journal club presentation is a part of their curriculum apart from the seminar. Thus, the resident should make use of this opportunity to gather the points from the question raised or by the faculty of critical appraisal and these inputs should be converted into publication by the resident. This is one of the best possible ways as during their residency of 3 years more than 15 journal club presentations they will be exposed. This may be submitted as commentary/correspondence as well as letter to editor. Again, here comes the importance of submitting to letter to the editor/commentary/correspondence. Residents are either least bothered or not so much aware of writing a letter to the editor. This is at the level of faculty or guide who should create awareness regarding various categories of publication. I strongly advise my resident to go for these as letter to editor in most situations. Under letter to editor category, different journals have a different set of material content they accept. For example, a letter to the editor to the already published content in the journal or unsolitary commentary of content published in other journals, case report/case series, in rare cases even an original content is being published. Hence, letter to the editor is actually the most scientific content that is perfectly reviewed by the editor in chief being expertise in that topic and published timely in a short period, or by the need of the peer review process if the EIC feels. It also acts as a medium to expose one’s scientific view in a different perception and their expertise that will help the author of if any published material or for the readers who were interested in carrying future studies. Hence, I personally always advise my resident to catch all the possible way to get things published by critically appraising any published content. This will not only increase the critical thinking but also develop an interest to enhance knowledge in a wide category of subjects. More than anything, if a resident saw their name in indexed database or on the Internet, they feel highly credited for their hard work and this vicious phenomenon continues, apart from their regular research. Another question arose, i.e. do they have the same weightage as the original article. The answer could not be given as “yes or no” directly. Because, there are instances, lots of original work or newer findings being published under letter to the editor section.^[3] The reason is most of the journals with good index accept letters to editor free of cost. This is the utmost important factor where the publication fee could not be taken care or can only pay less amount than that is published in the original article category.

In conclusion, motivate the resident beforehand the various publication strategy for the research work being done and

encourage them to get involved by supporting them in publication by the faculty.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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