

Medical Research

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*“Doctors pour drugs of which they know little,
to cure diseases of which they know less
into human beings of whom they know nothing”*

– VOLTIRE

RESEARCH into the field of medical sciences is an important factor in the attainment of medical care of excellent quality. Facts based on empirical data and carefully analysed statistically are necessary to make an accurate diagnosis, choose the best course of action and arrive at a fairly accurate prognosis.

Like the *‘Bahrain Medical Bulletin’*, new medical journals will appear in the area and there will, therefore, be a need for medical articles. This in itself is not a justification to carry out research, but at least will serve as a forum to present the end-product (articles).

It is appropriate at this time to examine the field of medical research, the motives behind it, the feasibility of carrying it out with our set up and the benefits that we may draw considering the tremendous effort and finances involved.

Apart from ‘advancement of medicine’ individual young doctors are often attracted to research because of the opportunities it offers for self advancement through publications. Genuine motives behind research are likely to be pride and satisfaction in doing good work, a quest for knowledge and a desire for recognition. Advancement in medicine will be difficult without a deep interest in the subject, a wide grasp of its fundamental facts and an insatiable curiosity on the part of investigators. These potentials when correctly channeled, can be of great value to the community.

As far as the community and the institute are concerned, the justification for research would be to add to the medical knowledge so that ultimately the patient may receive better treatment. Other reasons would be to attract or retain the services of specialists and to assist in stimulating a highly intellectual climate within the hospital. The claim that medical research is not compatible with good medical care is not necessarily true. In fact good medical care is usually delivered in academic institutes which are highly involved in medical research and teaching activities. Research may require appropriate staff, technicians, facilities and funds. It may be argued that only large centres with appropriate facilities should be involved. Nevertheless, small institutes should not be denied the opportunity to participate in research activity.

The approach to health is a comprehensive one as defined by WHO to be 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease'. It is obvious then that the inputs into health are many and include at least mans' physical environment, socio-cultural factors, personal habits and hereditary factors. It therefore, becomes mandatory to study these inputs in the locality of the patient, and this can only arrive from medical research in the area.

At times clinical research may present some risk to patients. In such situations, guidelines are provided like the Declaration of Helsinki which is provided as an appendix under Extract Section.

Although supervision and control can be provided by an appointed body, the ultimate responsibility must lie with the doctor in charge. After all he is the expert in his field and the final judge.

As Salmaniya Medical Centre is going to be a post-graduate 'teaching' centre with residency programmes in various fields, medical research will become an integral part of such programmes. Medical research is to be encouraged at this stage with the available facilities. Provisions of further facilities like laboratories, animal quarters, training of personnel should be taken into consideration when planning to turn Salmaniya into a 'teaching' centre and in the proposed establishment of the medical college in Bahrain. □□