The changing face of medical practice: Practising in the community and getting involved in research

Ashish Ranade[1]
[1]*Blooming Buds Centre for Pediatric Orthopaedics, Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital, Pune, Maharashtra, India*
E-mail ID: ashishranade@yahoo.com

Submission: 17.05.2023 Publication: 30.06.2023

https://www.doi.org/10.56136/BVMJ/2023_00053

Practicing clinicians have different skill sets and perspectives, which can be valuable in generating research questions. Here are some attributes that practicing clinicians may have, that could help them generate good research questions:

1. **Clinical expertise**: Practicing clinicians have first-hand experience in diagnosing and treating patients, which can give them insights into the gaps in knowledge or the areas where more research is needed. Their experience can also help them identify practical and relevant research questions that address the needs of patients.
2. **Patient-centeredness**: Practicing clinicians are focused on the needs of their patients and understand the challenges that patients face in their healthcare journey. This patient-centered perspective can help clinicians generate research questions that address important clinical questions and can have a meaningful impact on patient outcomes[(1)].
3. **Observational skills**: Practicing clinicians are trained to observe and document patient behaviors and responses to treatments. This observational skill can help clinicians identify patterns or trends that could be explored through research.
4. **Access to patient populations**: Clinicians have access to patient populations, which can help them design feasible studies with high external validity.
5. **Clinical intuition**: Clinicians often develop a sense of intuition about their patients and their clinical needs, which can help them identify research questions that are important and relevant to their patient population.
6. **Analytical skills**: Practicing clinicians are trained to analyze patients' health data and interpret radiological, laboratory, and other diagnostic results in the context of the patient's condition. This analytical skill can be used to design studies that use appropriate statistical methods and are well-powered to answer research questions.
7. **Collaboration skills**: Practicing clinicians often work in interdisciplinary teams and are skilled at collaborating with other healthcare professionals. This collaboration skill can help clinicians work with researchers from diverse backgrounds[(2)].

By leveraging these attributes, practicing clinicians can develop research questions that are both clinically relevant and scientifically rigorous, helping to advance the understanding of healthcare and improve patient outcomes.

Why to do research?

There are several reasons why a busy clinician might want to initiate independent research:

1. **Establishing credibility**: Engaging in research can help doctors to establish credibility within their profession. By publishing research articles in peer-reviewed journals, they can demonstrate their expertise and contribute to the knowledge base of their fields. This can also generate opportunities for speaking engagements and collaborations with other researchers.
2. **Personal fulfillment**: Conducting research can be a rewarding experience that allows you to explore your interests.
3. **Professional growth**: Research experience can be valuable for career advancement in many fields, including business, government, and non-profit organizations. Research experience is highly regarded in academic settings and can open doors to teaching positions or research-oriented careers. It can also contribute to career advancement in clinical settings, as doctors who actively engage in research are often perceived as leaders and experts in their field.
4. **Improving patient care**: Independent research can contribute to the development of knowledge in one's field and help fill gaps in existing research. Research can lead to new insights and advancements that can improve patient care.
5. **Social impact**: Research may have the potential to impact society positively, either by solving a problem or by informing policymakers.

Now, one might be thinking, "That all sounds great, but I don't have time for research!" That's a valid concern, but there are ways to fit research into a busy schedule[(3)]. One could start by collaborating with other researchers or joining an existing research project. This can help spread out the workload and make it more manageable. One could also look for research opportunities that align with one's clinical practice so as to incorporate research into the day-to-day work. While it might

seem daunting at first, there are ways to fit research into a busy schedule and make it a valuable part of one's professional life[4,5].

Here are some tips on how to find time for research:

1. **Time management:** It's crucial to manage time effectively to balance work, personal life, and research. It would help to make a schedule and stick to it as much as possible. Blocking time each week or month for research is a good option.
2. **Collaborate with others:** Working with a team can help to divide the workload and reduce the time needed to commit to the research project. Find colleagues with similar research interests and work together. It might be useful to connect with academic institutions such as universities or teaching hospitals to explore opportunities for collaboration.
3. **Use technology:** Many tools are available that can help streamline research, such as online databases and electronic medical records. Research management platforms such as Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) or Google forms can help with data collection and analysis. Tools like reference management software (e.g., Mendeley, Endnote, Zotero) can help with organizing relevant research articles and creating bibliographies for the study. These platforms also allow sharing the library with the team or colleagues involved in the project.
4. **Attend conferences:** Attending conferences and workshops can provide an opportunity to learn about the latest research and network with other researchers. It will help broaden the knowledge and inspire to explore new research ideas. It will also help to identify the areas of your research interest.
5. **Seek support:** Seek support from mentors, colleagues, or research assistants to help manage research projects.

In summary, getting involved in research as a private practitioner can help improve clinical practice, contribute to science, and carve a niche in the community.

ORCiD

Ashish Ranade 0000-0003-0925-6427

References

1. Bawaskar HS, Bawaskar PH. Efficacy and safety of scorpion antivenom plus prazosin compared with prazosin alone for venomous scorpion (Mesobuthus tamulus) sting: randomised open label clinical trial. BMJ. 2011 Jan 5;342.
2. Amuah J, Mutasingwa DR, Amankwah EK. Enhancing Collaboration between Clinician-Researchers and Methodologists in Clinical Research. J Pediatr. 2020 Jun 1;221:S58-61.
3. Bawaskar HS. Why Indian doctors are lethargic about active research. Indian J Med Ethics. 2015 Jan-Mar;12(1):60.
4. Goldstein AM, Blair AB, Keswani SG, et al; Basic Science Committee of the Society of University Surgeons. A Roadmap for Aspiring Surgeon-Scientists in Today's Healthcare Environment. Ann Surg. 2019 Jan;269(1):66-72.
5. Ikonomidis JS. Solutions for surgeon-scientists. J Thorac Cardiovasc Surg. 2020 May 1;159(5):1917-20.