



Urological Research: Some Thoughts and Hopes



Progress in urology, like all other surgical and medical specialties, is a continuous process of critical evaluation of medical literature rejecting what is superfluous and accepting what proved to be correct in the light of one's own observations and experience.

The need for checking, revising and updating medical knowledge never ceases. In all fields of urological practice whether related to etiology, diagnosis or treatment, there will, always, remain many knowledge gaps, ambiguities and unsolved problems calling for attention and waiting for a solution. Research is the search and "re search" for an answer to the endless number of questions posed by such gaps and ambiguities in medical knowledge.

It is for that reason that medical research ought to be considered as an integral part of medical practice. Accordingly, urological research is in actual fact an essential part of urological practice. The routine day to day practice is bound to raise so many unanswered questions and, hence, generate several research ideas in the mind of the thoughtful urologist who is aware of his role, "by default", as a researcher. Many of these ideas, easily transformed into simple research projects, can be pursued by such an investigative-minded urologist, sole or with the cooperation of his colleagues, even in the absence of the sophisticated research facilities usually only present in research centers and specialized institutes.

This does not mean, at all, that we do not need such fully dedicated research centers and institutes; on the contrary they are badly needed

and a lot of efforts and generous funding should be allocated for that purpose in our part of the world in order to deal with local health problems not looked into or investigated by other international research communities. However, the emphasis, in this deliberation, is laid on the importance of spreading "research mindedness" among our new generation of urologists. This critically-evaluative and investigative "research mindedness" will soon yield its fruits of creativeness and originality.

In order to achieve that goal of spreading "research mindedness" among our new generation of urologists, efforts should be started during their undergraduate years. In addition to the rest of its other goals, the medical undergraduate curriculum should be designed to cultivate the "update-your-knowledge" and the "search-for-truth" attributes and develop the "critically evaluative" mental quality among medical students. The basic principles of clinical and epidemiological research methods including medical statistics can be started at this stage and further elaborated upon in more details and in a practical way during the urological training years.

Particular emphasis needs to be laid, in our part of the world, on population-survey studies to establish the relative frequency per cent of different urological diseases and determine any regional variations that may be of etiological significance. The urology trainee needs to be well acquainted with basic epidemiological and bio-statistical techniques. A few weeks rotation with a clinical epidemiologist and a biostatistician participating in a field survey related to a urological disease would be very rewarding.

In all the above-mentioned measures, right from the beginning, graduates should be encouraged to develop their own approaches. On the long run, this will pave the way for them to achieve originality and inventiveness.

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