

Developing Evidence-Based Medicine and Healthcare in Developing Countries: Role of Indian Journal of Medical and Health Sciences

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Abstract

The objective of this editorial is to implicate the role of *Indian Journal of Medical and Health Sciences* (IJMHS) in Evidence-based medicine (EBM) and Evidence-based healthcare (EBHC). Evidence-based healthcare is contemporarily conceived on the view that clinical decisions should be based on the best available scientific evidence but recognizing patient preferences, the context of healthcare and the judgment of the clinician. Evidence-based healthcare is a process that identifies policy or clinical questions and addresses these questions by generating knowledge and evidence to effectively and appropriately deliver healthcare in ways that are effective, feasible, and meaningful to specific populations, cultures, and settings. The IJMHS in this regard welcomes articles on all aspects highlighting the role and implications of EBM and EBHC in developing countries in order to foster a strong platform to develop such models in the region.

Keywords: Evidence-based medicine; Evidence-based healthcare; Journal's role; Developing countries.

On the outset, I extend my warm gratitude to the Publisher, Red Flower Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi for their trust and belief in my capabilities to hold the post of Editor-in-Chief of a multidisciplinary medical and health journal, the *Indian Journal of Medical and Health Sciences* (IJMHS). I wish to reciprocate this feeling by promoting a strong interdisciplinary representation in the IJMHS editorial board in order to facilitate this model in medical and healthcare practice, education, research and administration. The objective of this editorial is to implicate the role of IJMHS in Evidence-based medicine (EBM) and Evidence-based healthcare (EBHC).

Evidence-based healthcare is contemporarily conceived on the view that clinical decisions should be based on the best available scientific evidence but recognizing patient preferences, the context of healthcare and the judgment of the clinician.[1] Evidence-based medicine (EBM) is strongly shaping the nature and direction of biomedical practice and organizational culture by directly influencing

clinician resistance, professional de-skilling, and inter-specialty interactions whilst maintaining professional autonomy, clinical judgment and therapeutic integrity.[2]

Evidence-based healthcare is a process that identifies policy or clinical questions and addresses these questions by generating knowledge and evidence to effectively and appropriately deliver healthcare in ways that are effective, feasible, and meaningful to specific populations, cultures, and settings. This evidence is then appraised, synthesized, and transferred to service delivery settings and health professionals who then utilize it and evaluate its impact on health outcomes, health systems, and professional practice.[3]

Clinically, research indicated that the majority of clinicians recognized the need to keep up-to-date with changes in their specialty and many visit their libraries on a frequent basis, however, few appear to be searching for information with which to inform their immediate clinical decisions.[4] Findings from

evidence provide valuable information on a range of design characteristics or interventions, including single-bed rooms rather than multibed rooms, effective ventilation systems, a good acoustic environment, nature distractions and daylight, appropriate lighting, better ergonomic design, acuity-adaptable rooms, and improved floor layouts and work settings in hospitals.[5]

Education and training programs aimed at improving EBHC included critical appraisal workshops,[6] and they reported effectiveness of such training programs by considering learner, patient or health system outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude, judgement, competence, decision-making, patient satisfaction, quality of life, clinical indicators or cost.[7]

Administratively, medical and health science librarians need to concentrate on the development of 'purchasing intelligence facilities' along the recommendations of NHS Executive's guidance document that impacted upon the whole culture of an organization.[8] Risk management through improvement of patient safety is a key aspect of EBHC by addressing the benefits and challenges that might arise in adopting an evidence-based approach.[9]

In Europe, North America and elsewhere, growing interest had focused on evidence-based healthcare systems, incorporating the deployment of practice guidelines, as a field of application for health telematics.[10] In contrast to developed countries, the developing countries' health workers are often forced to make diagnostic and treatment decisions based on limited knowledge, unhelpful information, infrequent and low technology back-up services and without the support of more senior staff.[11] Thus poor access to information makes this endeavour near impossible for health professionals working with vulnerable communities in low-income economies.[12]

The evidence-based research and reviews thus serve to facilitate evidence-based decision making by policy makers, healthcare professionals and consumers, and to guide

future research.[13] Epidemiologic findings with regard to major illnesses must be amassed, enhanced, and expanded further into related areas as a foundation for evidence-based medicine that is based on clinical practice, as well as for evidence-based healthcare that includes public health-related issues.[14]

There is need for programs such as Executive Training for Research Application (EXTRA) aimed to increase the skills of health services executives and their organizations to use research evidence in healthcare management and decision-making.[15] There is also a need for assimilation of evidence-based healthcare innovations (EBHI) in order to reap the benefits of the nation's vast investments in healthcare discoveries.[16]

The medical and healthcare professionals' skills, knowledge, and abilities determine four competency domains: leadership, communication, business skills, and technology,[17] which establish its best magnitude when they contribute to growth of evidence through authorship, peer-reviewership and editorship. The IJMHS in this regard welcomes articles on all aspects highlighting the role and implications of EBM and EBHC in developing countries.

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