

INVOLVING UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS IN RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Undergraduates can do wonder in research and one of the example is Charles Best, a medical student when he along with his guide, Frederick Banting discovered insulin. In 1869, a medical student, Paul Langerhans, reported first time that insulin arises from the pancreatic islets of Langerhans. Johan Ham, a medical student from Leiden discovered spermatozoa in 1677. There are many other examples of students who have contribution in the field of medical research.

The undergraduate medical education has main target to train future doctors in providing safe and effective patient-centered care but the swift developments in healthcare research and technology demands that the decisions of a physician should be based on strong scientific evidence.¹ Therefore involving research to undergraduate medical education can enhance the quality of future healthcare.

Medical student research can be mandatory, elective or extracurricular.² In India, unlike Germany, the research is voluntary for undergraduate medical students so very few students take active participation in research activities.

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The Medical Council of India had brought "Vision 2015" document with an aim for developing competency based curriculum for undergraduate medical students.³

The Indian Council of Medical Research Short Term Studentship (ICMR-STs) is a funding for undergraduate medical students for performing a short-term research project under a guide.

This ICMR-STs has attracted many medical students for performing fruitful research experience.⁴ Similar funding for undergraduate medical student is also being provided by Rajasthan University of Health Sciences.⁵

The Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR), a journal of ICMR has a special section where research done by undergraduates as a part of ICMR-STs or Department of Science and Technology's *Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana* etc can be published. Even Opinion pieces from the student can be considered for publication.⁶ This has been of increasing interest in medical students as publishing a research article in a reputed journal like IJMR was never easy, specially for a student researcher.

With all these opportunities available, we need to update and encourage medical students of Dr. S.N. Medical College for taking part in short term research activities as very few students are aware of these opportunities. Undergraduate students need to be encouraged to take active participation in medical conferences and CME where they can

present their research work through poster or oral paper presentation. Also, a special section of undergraduate research paper in this journal will boost up them for taking part in research.

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