

Book Review

Medical research, R.L. Bijlani [Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi] 2008. 326 pages. Price: not mentioned
ISBN 81-8448-417-8

It is unfortunate that the term ‘Medical Research’ is not introduced at medical school, neither at undergraduate nor at postgraduate level. One is expected to learn about it like swimming, by just plunging into it. What one needs is a good mentor. Dr. Bijlani’s theme, “all you wanted to know but did not know whom to ask”, sums up the book entirely – what is research, why do research, how to go about it, is all beautifully illustrated in the book, and with practical examples. He has chosen some very apt and thought provoking quotes for all chapters of the book, and in Appendix III, to leave a lasting impression on the mind. All parents should give this book as gift to their passing out wards, if not to make them a researcher but at least an admirer of it, and with increasing emphasis on introducing research culture in undergraduate medical students, perhaps at admission to medical school itself. Exposure to research makes us better clinicians as well. It makes us acutely aware of how many things we still do not know, how the medical knowledge is continuously evolving, and the importance of evidence to practice good quality medicine.

Besides introduction to medical research, the book gives practical guidance to many areas of research. These include chapters on Clinical Research, Public

Health Research, Mental Health Research, Laboratory Research and Qualitative Research, in addition to introduction to Medical Statistics (Chapters 4 & 5), Ethical and regulatory issues (Chapters 16 & 17) and sources of funding (Appendix IV) as well. There are also chapters on guidance to writing Research Grant Application, Thesis and Research paper, and to prepare for presentation at a conference. There is also an off-beat chapter on research on Yoga which is an interesting lesson on being open-minded. In all, the book makes one aware of most of the nitty-gritty of research, laying a foundation on which one may build his/her own superstructure if one decides to follow the career of a research scientist or research physician. Fig. App. II.2 on page 301 is an interesting illustration of the dilemma about career choices, not only for medical students but for all walks of life.

The book is interesting and easy reading, illustrated with practical examples. There are questions and problems at the end of each chapter, which would make the reader recapitulate what he/she has learnt. There are references at the end of many chapters which can serve as source of further information. This book should adorn the shelves of the library of all medical institutes.

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