



A one day workshop on basic research methodology and scientific writing at Mahendranagar, Nepal

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Context & reason for the idea

Mahendranagar (Bhimduttanagar) is a town in far western Nepal around 700 kilometres from the capital, Kathmandu. Because of its remoteness few scientific programs are conducted there. Faculty and students from this important regional centre have limited exposure to research methodology and scientific writing. Though exact figures are lacking the region contributes only a small percentage to scientific publications. The Far-West College of Medicine in Mahendranagar conducts Health Assistants (HA), Diploma in Pharmacy and Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology courses. Students are admitted after completing ten years of schooling. They have undergone three years of clinical training and staff health posts in an institution delivering primary healthcare in the country (1). Emigration of trained health manpower (especially Bachelor and Masters level) is a major problem and diploma students are key health personnel in semi-urban and rural areas. Awareness of research methodology among students and faculty in the institution was low. The college was interested in conducting a one-day workshop to partly address this issue. The workshop was conducted on April 1st, 2012 to introduce students and faculty to basic research methodology and scientific writing.

Methods

We have been conducting different workshops since 2008. We follow a low-cost model of conducting the workshops at a cost of around US\$ 200-600 for the entire workshop (2). The same model was adopted here. The topics selected were designed to introduce participants to research and create a curiosity to learn more. A mixture of facilitator presentations and small group activities were used. The language used was a mixture of English and Nepali. The college faculty members

acted as co-facilitators helping with group dynamics. The workshop was conducted from 9 am to 6 pm with breaks for tea and lunch. The topics covered were: 'Doing research in a resource constrained setting-Is it possible?', 'What research can be done in Mahendranagar and how?', 'Different types of research in health sciences', 'Quantitative research', 'Qualitative research', 'Research networking', 'Basic statistics for research' and 'Introduction to scientific writing'. Participant presented their group activities using flip charts. A total of seventy students and faculty participated and were divided into six groups. Each group had at least one faculty member as a co-facilitator and the four authors were the main facilitators.

Evaluation

Formal evaluation of the workshop using a questionnaire was not done. The impact of the workshop was studied through informal discussions with the participants and the local organizing committee. Participants shared their impressions at the end of the workshop. The response was positive. This was the first workshop on research attended by most students. The concept of group work and group presentations was new. They felt the workshop introduced them to the topic in an interactive and interesting manner. They wanted a more advanced research methodology workshop in future.

Reference

1. Pfaff C. Midlevel primary healthcare workers in Nepal. *SA Fam Pract* 2004;46 (2):32-33.
2. Shankar PR, Subish P. A low cost model of organizing and conducting workshops in Nepal. *Australasian Medical Journal* 2011;4:164-5.

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