Dear Editor,

I immensely enjoyed reading the original article “Motivators and barriers to research among doctors in the Indian medical scenario: A cross-sectional study from Karnataka, India” in your previous issue.

I feel that it has studied most of the aspects surrounding research among Indian doctors very well. It mentions that personal reasons and mandatory job requirements are the most common motivators for pursuing research and lack of access to journals, lack of proper guidance and lack of funding are the common challenges faced by Indian physician-researchers.

Research in medicine, in my opinion, is essential for sharing data across the world and updating the knowledge of medical practitioners and medical scientists. It also brings about a bridge in the gap between the known and the unknown. Most institutions provide encouragement to avid researchers to perform their study within their institution. But this scenario is quite different for a medical undergraduate.

The motivators for research among medical students vary. Some medical students pursue research for improving their credentials to apply for higher education in other countries. Some students are highly interested in the idea of research and its contribution to medical science. Some belong to an intersection of both these categories of students. Some are indifferent to the idea of research.

The challenges faced by medical undergraduates are quite similar to those faced by doctors in the aforementioned study. Some important challenges to research among undergraduates are: Lack of research mindset and knowledge of research methodology among students, lack of knowledge of journals to submit to, long duration from submission to acceptance to publication of articles, lack of funding and grants to ambitious projects and busy lifestyle of doctors who have to guide the students wishing to perform research.

As the medical curriculum does not include training for interested students who would like to pursue research and the lack of importance given to research during undergraduate training, students lack the basic knowledge of statistics and research methodology required to begin their project. This can be avoided by including extra courses on research in colleges for interested medical students.

Finding a guide who will take out the time from their busy lifestyle is a blessing. Finding and approaching them is a process by itself and definitely not an easy task. Finding research grants for funding of undergraduate research can also be a difficult task.

On completion of the research project, most students do not know which journals to submit to and which journals may accept their articles. Most students commit the mistake of submitting to journals which are unsuitable which find the article out of scope for their journal. The best way to combat this challenge is to research the journal meticulously and if possible, to ask the guide about a few possible journals.

The long duration from the submission to publication of articles dissuades many prospective student researchers. There is a high percentage of rejection of articles by various journals until it finally gets accepted.

Nevertheless, despite the challenges, medical undergraduates must be encouraged to perform research in their field of interest as the satisfaction and learning experience will be like none other. Medical research is a gratifying and intellectually stimulating activity that will amplify the interest of undergraduates towards medical science and provide the happiness of contributing to the vast and beautiful universe of medicine.

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