

Editorial

Management and Coordination Issues of Health Research and Its Key Challenges

Introduction

Health research is now seen as an integral tool for national development, its effective organization, management and coordination are imperative. In any research system, management and coordination issues play a pivotal role in determining whether a system will be successful in achieving its objective(s). It is also to ensure maximum functional efficiencies for timely achievement of the desired goal(s). Management and coordination issues are intrinsically and intricately linked not only to research policy of the research institution but also to the organizational structure of the research institution. At the macro level, management and coordination also encompass communication issues among research institutions in the country as well as with research institution located outside the country. The issues are generally related to a research process, which are functioning within the research environment. Consequently, the system approach or systems analysis is highly appropriate to explore, modify and improve management and coordination issues related to improvement of health research activities in a research institution.

Coordination of health research among researchers, research institutions, universities and affiliated ministries is essential for overall improvement of research scenario in a country. Therefore, development of simple, practical and clear-cut procedures, and directives for coordination is essential. Moreover, there is a need to improve evidence-based information for program planning, monitoring and service management. The research capacity of the medical/health institutions is limited and the coordination between them is still poor. In this era of a fast developing information superhighway, research managers should take an advantage to improve their research management and link with other research institutions and scientists. Modalities for this could be sought. Moreover, well-established strategies should have to be developed to mobilize young researchers and nurture them so that they can become full-fledged scientists.

Previously a large number of health researches carried out in Nepal had been done by individual researchers in their areas of interest, but now that trend has gradually been changing, and the health research is being undertaken through universities, institutions, medical schools, research institutes, NGO, INGO and the Government.

Key Challenges

How to utilize the research based information:

The government, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGO, UN agencies, and foundations are funding many health research projects in Nepal. The impact of the health research on overall health care delivery and health promotion has not been assessed. The general impression is that the results of health research has been less likely to utilize by decision makers while formulating policy and programs in health services. The decision maker's point of view stated that the research under taken by health research scientists or donor agencies and NGOs were limited to their own interest areas rather than on national health priorities causing difficulty in utilization of research findings.

How to develop sustainable health research system:

How to sustain national health research system in the country was the key challenge. Frequent change of health administrator in key position in various levels, inadequate financial support from the government, and lack of

-

career structure with adequate incentives for the scientist/researcher is becoming another challenge, and thereby evolving the situation of brain drain not only from one institution to another but also from the country itself. So, there is urgent need of concrete mechanism to solve these kinds of problems.

How to implement the research based recommendations.

There were several research-based recommendations documented in the several meetings, seminars, and conferences, but the most challenging part is to implement these recommendations. In what way, the research organization/agency/institute etc. will have to plead for such recommendations and how. Therefore, there is a need of effective planning to mechanize such recommendations into action.

How to make effective networking and coordination:

Most of medical/health institutes/agencies designated as research centers were not conducting any sort of research and they themselves were not collaborating and networking with each other. It seemed that putting the word "Research" in any organization's name made easier to get the various things (equipments, medical supplies etc.) from abroad without paying the government tax.

Conclusion

In order to utilize the research findings into the national context, it is very essential to advocate for health research promotion at all levels: political leaders, the government scientists, research institutions and the public. It is also necessary to promote continued dialogue with the policy and decision makers from planning stage of research to utilization.

Dr. Rajendra Kumar BC
Editorial Board Member
Journal of Nepal Health Research Council
E-mail: drrajendra2005@gmail.com