

Building Research Capacity in health care system

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Abstract: The health sector is continuously undergoing change and structural reforms, resulting from rising demands of care for chronically ill, ageing populations, co-morbidity, fast advancing technology, as well as changes in inter-professional delivery models. These changes and reforms, combined with the current lack of economic growth indicate that the existing structures of health systems and their traditional ways of functioning are no longer viable and cannot meet current and future health demands. This is resulting in the need for more capacity building to address the underlying challenges. Enhanced capacity is believed to promote problem solving, reduce the gap between evidence and practice, and promote healthy gains. It is considered a powerful and cost-effective way of advancing healthcare and development and, if done well, can improve collaboration between high-and low-income countries and address health inequalities.

Capacity is term of jargon commonly used in the health promotion literature. Overall capacity is considered as a measure of ability but simply capacity 'is the ability to carry out stated objectives' without capacity, the most innovative and brilliant interventions will not be implemented, won't be effective and commonly fail to achieve aims

Capacity building is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations and societies increase

their ability to understand and solve problems in a sustainable manner. The health sector is continuously undergoing change and structural reforms. This is resulting in the need for more capacity building to address the underlying challenges. Enhanced capacity is believed to promote problem solving, reduce the gap between evidence and practice, and promote healthy gains.

Research capacity building is an ongoing and interactive process of

empowering individuals, interdisciplinary teams, networks, institutions and societies to identify health and health-related challenges; to develop, conduct and manage scientifically appropriate and rigorous research to address those challenges in a dynamic and sustainable manner; and to share, apply and mobilize research knowledge generated with the active participation of engaged stakeholders and decision-makers.

The aim of research capacity building in a healthcare setting is to strengthen health professionals' existing clinical expertise with complementary research skills. This enables them to contribute to the production of high-quality research which advances the knowledge base of their profession, demonstrates the effectiveness of interventions, influences funding bodies, and enables evidence-based practice. A prerequisite of research capacity building is the development of research competence to generate knowledge in order to enhance patient safety and quality of care.

The six dimensions of research capacity building in Cooke's framework are: 1) Building skills and confidence 2) Ensuring research is close to practice 3) Developing

partnerships and linkages 4) Supporting appropriate dissemination 5) including elements of continuity and sustainability 6) Making investments in infrastructure to enhance research capacity building.

key challenges to building research capacity in developing countries are

adequate funds for researcher, Staff salaries, Training of individual researchers, Career structure for researchers, Good research management, Equitable access to scientific and technical information, Partnerships between developed and developing countries; Establishment of effective interfaces between research producers and users; and Competent and motivated institutional leaders. The main barriers to nursing research are Lack of knowledge, Lack of skills and Confidence to engage in the research process.

Seven principles for good practice in research capacity strengthening are:

1) Network, collaborate, communicate and share ,2) Understand the local context and accurately evaluate existing research capacity ,3) Ensure local ownership and secure active support, 4) Build in monitoring, evaluation and learning from the start ,5) Establish robust research

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governance and support structures, and promote effective leadership ,6) Embed strong support, supervision and

mentorship structures ,7) Think long-term, be flexible and plan for continuity

References

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