



The Evaluation of International Relationship Role in Promotion of Health System Research

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Abstract

Background: Regarding the need for scientific development and achievement our national goals, it is clear that international cooperation has the main role in this way. Here is a report on what we have done during past almost 10 years (2001-2011) in the field of international medical research activities in Deputy Ministry for Research & Technology, Ministry of Health, Iran. Our effort was focused to identify and contact with the prominent scientific centers among the world where could make a connection between our researchers in medical science universities with those centers.

Keywords: International relationship, Health, Promotion, Iran

Introduction

The sheer volume of international collaborations has been increased substantially during the last 20 years (1, 2). This increase is also noticed in the number of internationally co-authored papers between the developed (usually referred to in political jargon as the 'North') and developing and emerging countries (usually referred to as the 'South', for example, India and Bangladesh, Mexico and Brazil, China and Pakistan). Despite its late start, China has published many collaborative papers with most Asian countries and also with the North, confirming the effectiveness of China's current open-door policy. Papers resulting from international collaboration appear in higher-impact journals and are cited more often than papers that are the outcome of local research (3). Only 7.4% of the papers appearing in journals with an impact factor equal to or greater than 5 were published by the local authors during the study period in Taiwan (1990-2004) compared to 13.6% of the publications that

had international collaboration (2). Taiwan's researchers collaborated with 76 countries, with the greatest share from USA (69.9%). Although the majority of collaborations are mainly between the North and the South, only one fifth are South-South collaborations (collaboration between developing countries) (4). However, majority of these collaborations are still disorganized efforts, and they vary according to the centers and universities they are originating from. There are no coherent international collaborations, and many failures have been reported.

"International Research collaboration has always helped scientists to keep abreast of international science and to share expertise and resources which enhances the scientific community and in-house training" (5). It benefits both the health care system and the population as it may provide new treatments which are probably not already available in that country. It also helps in building up of research capacity and has direct economic

significance. Some governments are already beginning to pay premiums to become hubs in the global excellence network. It remains to be seen whether this development will produce significant changes in the world research capacity.

The benefits have also been reflected in the developed countries (4, 6, 7). For example, the new policies in the United Kingdom which are led by primary health care have resulted from international health policy based on the experiences of many developing countries over the past 30 years (7).

This study is focused on 10 years reviewing in the field of international cooperation research (2001 – 2011) which performed in International Affairs Office of Deputy Ministry for Research & Technology, Ministry of Health, Treatment and Education), Iran.

Methods

This report is a descriptive study which concluded from investigation of all approved joint research projects profiles in international affairs unit, particularly those are in final step. The assessment focused on international scientific relations and interaction between our research centers and medical universities with international prestigious research centers through the world based on our priorities. So we used from the recorded documents of all activities in international relationships which were performed during recent 10 years (2001 – 2011) (8).

In this respect the objectives and strategies include the following points.

Outlook:

* Create and enhancement communication between our research centers and medical universities with world's leading research centers in order to increase our share in global knowledge production.

Specific objectives:

* Identify the global centers in field of our country's policies and achievement their cooperation

* Facilitate international research cooperation with credible science and technology centers in order to strengthen our position

Activities:

- Identification of new facilities and signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- Support the international joint projects
- Support and strengthening of the most success programs
- Education the (Ms & PHD) students

International Cooperation has begun actively in Deputy for research and technology directly with the major scientific centers around the world and of course World Health Organization

Here are described some specific forms of relationship (8, 9).

A) Collaboration with the Karolinska Institute in Sweden:

- On December 9, 2002 MOU was signed between the Vice President for Research of Ministry of Health and the Karolinska institute in Stockholm- Swedish. So, 11 joint research projects were started, then in later years the joint research projects have been reached up.

B) Cooperation with Germany:

Cooperation agreement was written in May 2004

C) South Africa:

Cooperation agreement was written in 2004

G) Belarus:

Cooperation agreement was written In July 2008.

Also, MOUs were signed with Malaysia and Indonesia as well.

Description

Regarding to the results of the international research projects supports, particularly with prominent scientific centers, it is clear that this kind of supporting results enhancement of capabilities and also trained specialized forces. In this regard the Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Policy focused on further strengthening and promoting of these activities. Recently, we support many new research projects joint with various countries, especially the EMRO region which will be developed in near future. Applied on so many countries and their

international collaboration effects on citation per paper which have a significant correlation ($P < 0.0001$) between them (Fig. 1).

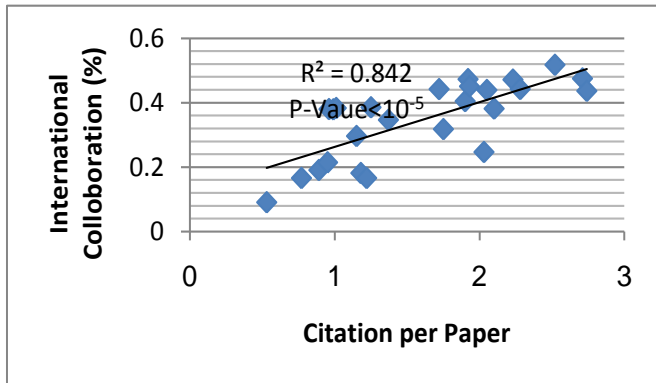


Fig. 1: Correlation between International collaboration and Citation per paper

So, any more efforts in the field of international scientific relationship make a new path for Development (10). This results show the need of more efforts in international scientific cooperation. Also in other study for representation of different

nations in international public health journals illustrated an imbalance and possibly even inequity in the composition of editorial boards and offices of international health journals that should be paid significant attention. This can contribute to fill the equity gap exists between health in developing and developed countries (11).

Conclusion

Developmental process in supporting of the international projects demonstrated acceptable outcomes which consisted educational programs in postgraduate students in PhD, and MS, publishing papers and performing scientific meetings. At present, here are the finalized projects achievements so far. These results demonstrate as Number of projects, Iranian centers, published articles submitted articles, congresses, postgraduate students, workshops, also there will be increasing the products in future from ongoing joint projects (Table 1).

Table 1: Results and products of 18 joint projects which supported last 10 years by Deputy of Research & Technology, MOH, Iran

Number of articles	Centers Iranian	Pub Article	Submitted article	Congress	Student	Workshops
26	9	20	10	32	20	17

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (Including plagiarism, Informed Consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc) have been completely observed by the authors.

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