MY LIFE AS A RESEARCHER AND EDITOR

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Introduction

I am a rheumatologist and clinical immunologist, currently working as an Assistant Professor at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS), which is a large tertiary care referral and training center in Lucknow, North India, catering to a population of nearly 300 million people in the state of Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring regions. I completed my undergraduate training in medicine at Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry, India with nine gold medals and distinctions in eleven subjects. Thereafter, I completed my postgraduate training in internal medicine at Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College, which is the premier referral centre in the Eastern Indian state of Odisha. After spending nearly a year at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi as a Senior Resident in Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology, I qualified for and joined the competitive fellowship program at SGPGIMS, Lucknow. In between, I also passed the prestigious MRCP (UK) examination and also obtained the Speciality Certificate in Rheumatology from the Royal College of Physicians, United Kingdom. After completing my training, I joined my alma mater JIPMER as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Immunology for a year, then I rejoined at my parent institute SGPGIMS as an Assistant Professor.

I currently serve as an Associate Editor of *Rheumatology International*, *Indian Journal of Rheumatology* (IJR), and the *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* (JRCPE). Furthermore, I serve as an editorial board member of the *Central Asian Journal of Medical Hypotheses and Ethics* (CAJMHE), *Mediterranean Journal of Rheumatology*, *Archives of Rheumatology*,

African Journal of Rheumatology and *Clinical Rheumatology*. Apart from my academic life, I like to perform aerobic exercises and follow sports (cricket, football, formula one) whenever I can.

My research career (mentors, path, and main achievements)

Research has always been at the forefront of my academic activities, thanks to the constant encouragement to pursue an academic career by my late father Dr. Sasanka Sekhar Misra and my mother Dr. Prativa Mishra right from childhood. In India, unlike in the West, research is incorporated as an integral part of postgraduate and fellowship training in medical specialties. During my postgraduate training in internal medicine, I was fortunate to be able to study inflammatory markers in association with cardiovascular risk in type 2 diabetes mellitus, thanks in no small part to an educational grant provided by my parents to procure the necessary research kits. My interest in research was further kindled by Professor Uma Kumar at AIIMS, New Delhi during my brief interlude there, where I first published research on systemic sclerosis. During my fellowship training at SGPGIMS, I was fortunate to be mentored by Professor Vikas Agarwal, who kindled my interest in researching about problems common in an Indian setting. In this context, I published research work on Takayasu arteritis, a form of large-vessel vasculitis more common in India than elsewhere, as well as sarcoidosis, a granulomatous inflammatory disease mimicking tuberculosis, and was also introduced to the conduct and reporting of multicentric research. Other significant research mentors have been Professor Vir Singh Negi at JIPMER, Professor Aman Sharma at the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and

Research, Chandigarh, Professor Anupam Wakhlu, Lucknow, Professor Vinod Ravindran, Calicut, and Professor Rohini Handa, New Delhi. I am grateful to my lab members, particularly Dr. Mohit K Rai, for always helping out with scientific experiments. My wife Dr. Pallavi Patro also supports me professionally with common research interests related to her specialty of pharmacology as well as personally.

While attending the annual conference of the British Society for Rheumatology during the final period of my fellowship training in 2015, I chanced to meet Dr. Armen Yuri Gasparyan, who eventually mentored me about publication ethics, scientific writing and editing, amongst other things.

My current research interests include vasculitis (Takayasu arteritis and ANCA-associated vasculitis), cardiovascular risk in rheumatic diseases, rheumatology education, scientific writing and editing, and systematic reviews. My ongoing laboratory research relates to endothelial and fibroblast biology, microparticles in different disease states, and animal models of wound healing and vasculitis. I have been fortunate to receive past and ongoing extramural research funding from the Indian Rheumatology Association, Asia-Pacific League of Associations for Rheumatology and the Indian Council of Medical Research to conduct research on systemic sclerosis and Takayasu arteritis.

My editorial career (mentors, path, and main achievements)

My experience with scientific communication began as a peer reviewer, then as an Associate Editor/Editorial Board Member as mentioned. I have attempted to improve standards of scientific writing and publication ethics at the journals that I am involved with, and tried to promote sound scientific methodology even if such studies have “negative” results. Peer reviewing helps me to keep abreast with the latest developments in my specialty. I hope our efforts shall enable the JRCPE and IJR to obtain the Journal Impact Factors, as well as enhance the indexation status of IJR in MEDLINE/PubMed Central.

How research and editing transform our scholarly activities

In my specialty, research is important to understand the patterns and behavior of diseases. Research which translates into tangible benefits for my patients is of great value. Therefore, translational research (reflecting in better patient care decisions) is more valuable than other forms of research. Appropriate editing and scientific

writing is important to enable responsible reporting of the conducted scientific research. In the current era of widely available information *via* the Internet, published research must be available online. While universal open access is ideal, it should not be accompanied with hefty open-access publishing charges, which are a hindrance to authors from low-middle income countries, who often have no or minimal research funding to publish their research. In this context, platinum open access, funded by societies and universities, is the ideal open access model for researchers in Asia. The CAJMHE serves as a model of platinum open access publishing, so also the IJR and JRCPE.

The key to good research is a sound research hypothesis, based on a thorough search of the existing literature, and an appropriate study design to answer the question posed by the hypothesis. Such research must be conducted in an ethical manner keeping in mind the benefits of the research participants (human research as well as animal research) in line with the prevalent regulations guiding such research locally and globally. Researchers must be aware of the guidelines provided by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors regarding research reporting, including considerations regarding authorship and conflicts of interest. Young researchers must particularly remain vigilant about predatory publishing and avoid being associated with it.

How India may benefit from quality research, editing, and publishing

India has the second largest population in the world and has its host of healthcare problems often unique to its location, such as the need for cost-effective therapies for practically every disease setting. Therefore, guidelines for disease management extrapolated from the West might not reflect socioeconomic and geopolitical realities. In this context, research in an Indian context is critical. While this has been recognized by the promotion of compulsory research for obtaining postgraduate degrees in India as well as for academic promotion, there remains an unmet need to promote principles of appropriate research conduct and ethical research reporting by organizing courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The recently mandated Basic Course in Biomedical Research for all doctors in postgraduate training or academic posts in the country is a welcome step in this regard. This needs to percolate further to inculcate these principles as compulsory course material during undergraduate medical training. Obtaining funding for research in India is difficult; however, researchers must understand that

observational studies can be conducted without funding support.

My message to ongoing researchers and editors in Central Asia

It is essential to devote time to conduct quality research

and follow appropriate ethical principles of research conduct and reporting. There is no substitute for thoroughness in research, even if it means that the research in question takes a longer time to conduct. It is imperative to identify a mentor early in your career who can guide you to progress further in your career.

ЗЕРТТЕУШІ ЖӘНЕ РЕДАКТОР РЕТІНДЕГІ МЕНІҢ ӨМІРІМ

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