



## A Tool to Reduce the Problems of Iranian Health Researchers

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### Dear Editor-in-Chief

Some problems in the health research system in Iran are related to wrong policies and inefficient research management. While some out of control cases have created obstacles for health research in Iran, we believe that the internal problems in Iran have had a more negative impact on the health research system.

Bikmoradi et al noted that an organizational problem such as inefficiency of academic governance, management problems such as incompetence of managers, and organizational culture are the major challenges for academic leadership in medical universities in Iran (1). In this regard, Badakhshan et al pointed to the lack of coordination between researchers and policymakers and believe that research priorities in Iran are not in line with the goals of long-term plans (2). Many research projects conducted in Iran do not have practical implications, and those that have, are only being stored in the library shelves. Besides, the research conducted in Iran should be based on the knowledge gaps in the country to benefit society (3).

After the Iran-Iraq war, which lasted for eight years, Iran has dramatically enhanced its health research and scientific infrastructures, so that 52

medical universities (ranked 11th in the world) (4), 37 research institutions, 188 health research centers (5), 36 science and technology parks, 400 non-governmental scientific associations, and 1000 scientific journals were founded by 2015 (6). In addition, over 54800 scholars (0.07% of the world's scholars) and 66314 faculty members were working in Iranian universities until 2015 (5). Iranian scholars used the established capacities very well so that in 2016, Iran ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the world with 51158 papers published in Scopus indexed journals (7).

According to the high problem-solving potential of Iranian scientists and scholars, to overcome healthcare problems, Iran should increase medical research funding. Iranian research infrastructures can accelerate this process. However, the lack of interaction among health scholars, poor teamwork, and inadequate distribution of research facilities are the main obstacles to achieving this goal. Academic social networking platforms are one of the most important tools for solving the problems of health researchers.

Today, there is a tremendous variety of social networks facilitating research activities. All these academic social networks have been designed



specifically for a particular purpose. For example, Research Gate has been developed to facilitate interaction among scholars and to share scientific research resources.

Currently, there are no academic social networks for distributing research resources; on the other hand, Iran has limited access to international social networks. Developing an Iranian academic social network with the above-mentioned goal, in addition to facilitating research activities, can also facilitate the distribution of research resources, improve the interaction among scholars, and increase the quality of research activities by optimal use of existing facilities a capability. Moreover, in addition to facilitating health research, a national academic social network reduces the effect of sanctions on health research by optimizing the distribution of research resources.

Therefore, considering Iran's current situation, the lack of national academic social networking in the healthcare field is considered as a weakness in research infrastructures. The design and implementation of an academic social network should be considered focusing on solving the problems of health scholars and improving research quality.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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