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National Report

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

In recent years, the volume of international cooperation is increasing (1, 2). This will include research projects and can also lead to the production of scientific papers. Usually, this is cooperation between different countries, including developed and developing countries. China is one of the countries that acted in this way. Usually, countries with international papers can print it in higher scientific journals, besides these articles are refereed more. International articles are higher than local journals (3). For example, Taiwan's researchers use this method. Taiwan's researchers published 7.4% of articles, between 1990 – 2004 years, in journals with highly impact factor and more published by collaboration with other countries (2). The main partners for Taiwan's researchers were from USA with 69.9% collaboration in this period. Of course, the main collaboration is between developed countries and less between developing countries. Usually developing countries like to joint with developed countries (4). International cooperation can to promote advances in medicine and lead to generate better papers (5). However, most of this cooperation is not organized (5). Butrous had summarized the types of collaborations in 8 patterns as follows: a) short term project oriented collaboration, b) long term collaboration, c) organized international collaboration, d) the large international collaboration by scientific societies, e) international cross border activities, f) international clinical trials, g) research in global scale, h) cooperation as a result of the growing global health threats (5).

"International Research collaboration has always helped scientists to keep abreast of international science and to share experiences and abilities which enhances the training and scientific exchange" (6). 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" (5). It remains to be seen whether this development will produce significant changes in the world research capacity.
Also, The impacts have been shown in the developed countries (4, 7, 8). For example, the new policies in primary health care in the United Kingdom have resulted from international health policy based on the experiences of many developing countries over the past 30 years (8).
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 is a descriptive report which concluded from investigation of all approved international 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) (9).
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 (9, 10).

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).

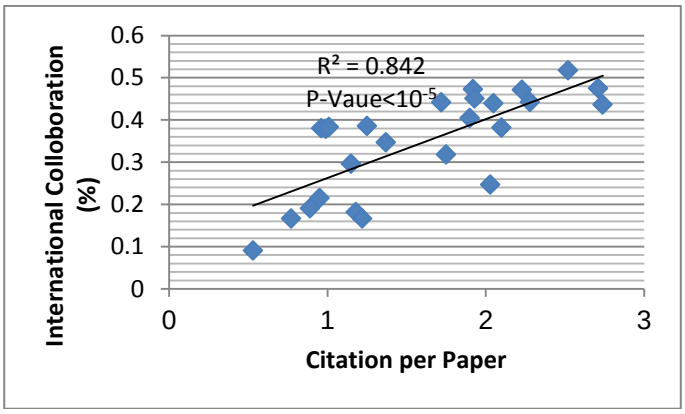

Fig. 1: Correlation between International collaboration and Citation per paper

So, any more programs in international scientific collaboration make a new window for development (11). This results show the necessity of more collaborations in international scientific projects. 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" (12).

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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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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