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Editorial

King HamadUniversity Hospital Medical Research Center

Jaffar M Al Bareeq, DLO, RCP, RCS (London)*

On 2 May 2012, General SH. Dr. Salman A Al Khalifa, the commander of King Hamad University Hospital(KHUH) and I met and discussed research in Bahrain, the meeting was attended by Dr. Dalal Al Hasan, training director at KHUH. The commander was in favor of establishing a medical research center attached to the hospital similar to the one attached to King Faisal Specialist Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The center would serve KHUH and Bahrain researchers.

The commander was very enthusiastic and receptiveto all suggestion and specially to establish BahrainResearch Committee, which would represent all those interested in health and medical research in universities, hospitals and other institutions.He assured me that KHUH would remain committed to encourage research and researchers in Bahrain.

He stated that in KHUH, we value medical research; the principal aim of research is to improve people's health and quality of life. No research could be performed at KHUH without the approval of the research and ethical committee; some research proposals would be funded by KHUH if the budget for such department is available.

KHUH Research Center Objectives

1. The center encourages research in all fields of medicine including medico-legal cases.
2. It provides research service for researchers at KHUH.
3. Works with researcher to develop specific aim for his research study anddesign researchprotocol for the study.
4. Edits research at all stages and helps researcher to prepare preliminary results.
5. Helps researcher through grant applications, describe the resources, facilities, support available, prepare research budget and approval.
6. Helps researcher adhere and abide by ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research.
7. To save millions for the government by finding the best and most efficient way to treat any condition; the most efficient medication to be purchased for public consumption, not to forget the tremendous patient’s benefits.
8. Health care priority setting, whichincludes commissioned research based on the national health priorities in Bahrain.
9. Translation of clinical research into practice and health policy.

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* Chief Editor
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Kingdom of Bahrain
Email: jmab@batelco.com.bh

10. Allocate the time and funds for those clinicians interested in research rather than to depend on overstretched practitioners, therefore, the traditional excuse, "lack of funds and time", will no longer be applicable.
11. The medical research center would assume the responsibility of the "Institutional Review Board" (IRB). The purpose of the IRB is to review research and determine if the rights and welfare of human subjects are adequately protected.The IRB can approve, require modification or disapprove all research activities. A researcher must report injuries to subjects, and the IRB must report to the KHUH authority.
12. Helps researcher to publish his/her research study in medical journals or books.
13. To develop clinical practice guidelines on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions.
14. To promote national, regional and international collaborations in science and medical research for the sake of improving health.
15. Create strong linkages between the universities, business, and the community.
16. To promote national, regional and international collaborations in science and medical research for the sake of improving health.
17. To continue the search for new field of science and medical research relevant to improving the health of patients in Bahrain, and with specific focus on genetic diseases.
18. Establish a National Electronic Library of Health, which will contain a fully searchable database of all healthcare research conducted by Bahraini researchers as well as provide an open access real-time resource for healthcare providers, researchers and policy makers.

Scientific research has produced substantial health benefits. It has also produced some troubling ethical problems. The public is concerned about the abuses of human subjects and animals in biomedical research. To avoid such abuses we will work closely with the researcher to adhere to the basic principles of ethics in research.

Health and medical researchers should concentrate on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of common diseases in Bahrain such as coronary heart diseases, diabetes, hereditary blood diseases, geriatric diseases, adolescent behavioral problems, children abuse and cancer.

Criteria for Accepting Research Proposals at KHUH

1. Conducted by health professionals in Bahrain.
2. Addresses common diseases or health care priorities in Bahrain.
3. Research aims to increase our understanding of common diseases, the etiology, diagnostic or therapeutic investigations.
4. The research project should aim to improve health policy and practice of medicine in Bahrain.
5. Applicant should submit a structured research proposal according to the agreed format.
6. The research proposal should be scientifically sound and ethically acceptable.
7. The research proposals will be peer-reviewed to identify the high quality research projects.

In 1964, the World Medical Association drew up a code of ethics on human experimentation. This code, known as the Declaration of Helsinki, which states the following[1]:

It is the mission of the doctor to safeguard the health of the people. His knowledge and conscience are dedicated to the fulfillment of this mission.

The declaration of Geneva of the world Medical Association binds the doctor with the words. **"The health of my patient will be my first consideration"**; and the International Code of Medical Ethics, which declares that **"Any act or advice which could weaken physical or mental resistance of a human being may be used only in his interest"**. Because it is essential that the results of laboratory experiments be applied to human beings to further scientific knowledge and to help suffering humanity, the World Medical Association has prepared the following recommendations as a guide to each doctor in clinical research. It must be stressed that the standards as drafted, are only a guide to physicians all over the world. Doctors are not relieved from criminal, civil and ethical responsibilities under the laws of their own countries.

In the field of clinical research a fundamental distinction must be recognized between clinical research in which the aims is essentially therapeutic for a patient and clinical research the essential object of which is purely scientific and without therapeutic value to the person subjected to the research.

Basic Principles of Clinical Research

(a) Clinical research must conform to the moral and scientific principles that justify medical research and should be based on laboratory and animal experiments or other scientifically established facts.
(b) Clinical research should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons and under the supervision of a qualified medical man.
(c) Clinical research cannot legitimately be carried out unless the importance of the objective is in proportion to the inherent risk to the subject.
(d) Every clinical research project should be preceded by careful assessment of inherent risks in comparison to foreseeable benefits to the subject or to others.
(e) Special caution should be exercised by the doctor in performing clinical research in which the personality of the subject is liable to be altered by drugs or experimental procedure.

Clinical Research Combined with Professional Care

In the treatment of the sick person, the doctor must be free to use a new therapeutic measure if in his judgment it offers hope of saving a life, re-establishing health, or alleviating suffering.

Informed consent should be obtained from the participant. In case of legal incapacity, consent should also be procured from the legal guardian; in case of physical incapacity, the permission of the legal guardian replaces that of the patient.

Non-Therapeutic Clinical Research

1. In the purely scientific application of clinical research, which is carried out on a human being, it is the duty of the doctor to remain the protector of the life and health of that person on whom clinical research is being carried out.

2. The nature, the purpose and the risk of clinical research must be explained to the subject by the doctor.
3. Clinical research on a human being cannot be undertaken without his free consent, after he has been fully informed (informed consent); if he is legally incompetent, the consent of the legal guardian should be procured.
4. The subject of clinical research should be in such a mental, physical, and legal state as to be able to exercise fully his power of choice.
5. Consent should, as a rule, be obtained in writing. However, the responsibility for clinical research always remains with the research worker; it never falls on the subject, even after consent is obtained.
6. The investigator must respect the right of each individual to safeguard his personal integrity, especially if the subject is in a dependant relationship to the investigator.
7. At any time during the course of clinical research, the subject or his guardian should be free to withdraw the permission for research to be continued. The investigator or the investigating team should discontinue the research if in his or their judgment it may, if continued, be harmful to the individual.

The medical dream of generations was to build medical research center, which would contribute and develop the practice of medicine in Bahrain.Dr. Salman and Dr. Dalal project of establishing a research center is a dream comes true for every researcher and health provider in Bahrain.

The message of Dr. Salman and I is simple, **"Our dedication should be solely to our profession, which dictates research and improvement. In whatever position you are, encourage your colleagues to do research, only through that we can improve medicine and medical care and in turn serve our patients."**

REFERENCES

1. Declaration of Helsinki. Recommendations Guiding Doctors in Clinical Research.Adopted by the 18th World Medical Assembly, Helsinki, Finland, June 1964.http://www.ftsr.ulaval.ca/ethiques/DOH/1964.pdf. Accessed on 20.4.2012.