Leadership and Quality Assurance in Psychiatric research

Professor N. Sartorius, MD, PhD, FRCPsych
Geneva Switzerland

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Issues addressed

• Selection of topics for research
  – General considerations
  – Topics for research in developing countries
• Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration in research
• Quality assurance in psychiatric research
• Publication of results of research in developing countries

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Selection of topics for research

• The criteria for the selection of a topic for research might include
  – Which topics are currently most popular
  – How much time will the study take
  – What resources (human and material) are available at my centre
  – What will be the long term research line in my department
Selection of topics for research in a developing country

• The criteria for the selection of a topic for research in a developing country might include
• The general criteria for the selection of a research topic
• The specific features of the country in which the research will take place
Selection of topics for research in a developing country

• The specific features that should be examined in selecting a research topic in a developing countries might include
  – Problems of particular local importance
  – Access to particular population groups
  – Lower cost of personnel
  – Topics likely to give visibility to centre in which the research is done.

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Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration in research

• Collaboration can
  – create networks supporting the entire programme of the centre
  – Provide access to resources that are not available in the centre
  – Facilitate the publication of results
  – Offer training opportunities
  – Provide inspiration for changes in one's centre

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Advantages and disadvantages of collaboration in research

• Collaboration however also has disadvantages including
  – Collaborative research takes longer than research without collaboration with other centres
  – Collaboration might require changes in the goals of the project (so as to make participation of all possible)
  – There are risks of unethical collaboration
Quality assurance in research

• Quality assurance of mental health research relates to
  – The selection of the topic of research
  – The ethical requirements for research
  – The selection of the method for the investigation
  – The interpretation of the results
  – The publication
  – Collaborative arrangements (if any)
Quality assurance in research: selection of the topic of research

• The topic of research should be relevant to the
  – Goals of medicine,
  – Advancement of science
  – Improvement of the quality of work of the institution in which the research has been carried out
  – Advancement of knowledge of the participating investigators
Quality assurance in research: observance of ethical requirements

• Research should correspond to the ethical requirements of research including
  – Avoidance of harm to the subjects of research or any other persons
  – The likelihood of beneficial effects for patients
  – A contribution to distributive justice (i.e. the equitable treatment of all those in need)
  – Confidentiality
  – Respect for the autonomy of those who are selected as subjects for research

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Quality assurance in research: selection of the methods of research

• The methods selected for the research
  – Should satisfy general ethical criteria
  – Should be appropriate to research goals
  – Should be appropriate for use by the personnel who will participate in research
Quality assurance in research: interpretation/publication of results

• The reasoning used in the interpretation of the results of the analysis must be transparent
• The publication of results should give credit to those who participated in the studies
• Negative findings should be published
Leadership issues

• Leaders should propose topics for research, not impose them
• Leaders should be just in their review of suggestions for future research involvement
• Leaders will give preference to proposals generated in their group unless they are likely to split the group

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Leadership issues

• Research provides an opportunity to strengthen the cohesion among all those participating in research

• Leaders should focus on
  – the selection of topics for research,
  – on strict adherence to ethical rules,
  – on prevention of burn-out of investigators and
  – on assignation of credit for work done

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Final comments

• Research in developing countries can be an important path to international recognition and collaboration
• The quality of research in the third world must be at least as high as that in the highly developed countries
• Leaders should use research to strengthen their teams' confidence and productivity

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