

Phobia about Thesis in Medical Postgraduate student



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A thesis or dissertation is a document submitted in support of candidature for an academic degree or professional qualification presenting the author's research and findings (1) As per the Regulations of Medical Council of India, M.D. thesis has been made an essential part of the degree course as this gives training in research methodology.(20)

Is it so? Not at least for most medical post graduate students. Thesis is usually seen by different aspect by students, guides and institutes.

For most guides it is some work given by university that has to be completed by the postgraduate student during his training which he has to approve some day before final day of submission. For institute/ university it is 'must do' for appearing in MD/MS exams without completing and approving it, the candidate won't be allowed to appear for exams. The past and present scenario had not changed much; thesis completion had been seen as obligation for passing exam. Most medical post graduate student (MPGS) looks at it as an "unknown creature" which he has never exposed throughout his medical education, and he doesn't know what to do with this. He only knows that this is a passport which will allow him to appear for the course completion exam and somehow he has to win over this unknown creature. As the time passes this creature grows bigger and complex. These students are unaware of the fact that this unknown creature is going to help them to fly high in their career. Education & awareness about research, thesis writing, and publishing should be given to the medical student at various levels for improvement of the present scenario.

Thesis being the first and for most the last research work, of the medical post graduate student. In the present world where every country, every university, institute are focusing towards research and publication, our first research of most medical student is just become copy and paste of others research work. Few medical speciality students give the reasons for this that they have no time during busy residency, thesis topic is given late, they don't know how to make thesis, less time left for submission of thesis, guides not giving enough time etc. which is not completely true. All this reasons are mostly to avoid meeting this unknown creature and monster. The guide has most important role in teaching his student to carry out research. Many guides themselves have lost interest in research project while few do not know how to carry out it.

Students are usually given topic by the guide as per the interest of the guide. No effort are usually been taken to take challenging or new research topic. The easiest way for student is to select topic is to ask seniors, few try to find already done thesis, some search on Pubmed. After the topic is finalised which is mostly the repetition of same research work already studied many times; the thesis is send for ethical committee clearance where some are asked queries, few given modification & rarely any getting rejected. The final hunt for this unknown is started just few months before the final date of submission. The candidate has to finish this within this time frame or the candidate won't be allowed to appear for the qualifying exams. Most guides usually give some correction and later sign before the last date of thesis submission. Some give multiple corrections before approval, and few are notorious of not giving approval easily.

Most students find the way of thesis completion like

- Copying from previous year's thesis, published articles, books, internet etc.
- Manipulating the data to support the hypothesis.
- Sometimes running behind the guide for approval or giving gifts to guides.

This all is fixed in the format given by the respective university. Final product delivered out is a good looking thesis decorated with images and colourful charts and diagram. Most of us must have gone through this phase doing similar thing. Since decades it is mostly unchanged and if it is going in same way; in long term will yield poor research and minimal progress in our speciality. Thesis being the first research is for training the student in research work. After completing their post graduation some join teaching institute, few start private practise, few continue with further education. Research work done during completion of thesis is of great help for everyone. One with research and publications is pushed much ahead at every stage than the other without it. For practising doctor, it helps to understand and analyse the journal research articles which help him to update his

knowledge and practicing style, build his curriculum vitae and for affiliation to major institutes as lecturers/consultants as research and published work is asked during interviews. For consultants/ faculties in teaching institutes it helps to carry out research work in future, reducing years of eligibility of PG guide, getting further promotions in designation, to guide their students as PG guides in research, understanding others research work and teaching to students and trainee under him. For students continuing with further education; candidate with research and publication are given preferences for fellowships as this helps the guide to carry their research project; while candidates opting for superspeciality has to complete another thesis during their training.

In recent years few steps have been taken by universities like assessment and reviewing of thesis by a PG guide outside universities & cancellation of repeating thesis topic. Due to this many thesis are getting correction, while few thesis are getting rejected. Institutes are sanctioning some funds to carry out research though not enough for few researches.

Also teaching MPGS with courses and work shop like 'Thesis Writing Course'(6) and 'Publish and Flourish'(7) are being conducted by speciality organisations and research groups.

Many good articles available to guide students to write manuscript are available. The common ones are 'how to read a scientific paper'(2), 'art of scientific writing'(3), 'tip for how to write a paper'(4), 'scientific writing a fun'(5) etc.

More steps for promoting research should be taken by institute/ university. This can be done by

- Training programmes like thesis writing and research study work shop for refreshing PG guides knowledge and teaching medical students.
- Including research and research methodology in more details during undergraduation.
- Weekday meets for discussion on research and thesis.
- Giving grants for carrying out research.
- Providing free access to various research articles to carry out research projects.
- Reducing duties hours of residents in institutes with huge patient load.
- Awards for the best 10 thesis in university with preference given to challenging/ new research topics.

Thesis phobia in MPGS is mainly due to lack of knowledge to do research and in writing thesis. The solution to this is by providing knowledge about research and thesis writing during undergraduation and post graduation.

It the inclusive responsibility of all student, guide, university, organisation to take out specialities to next level, which can be done mainly by education and awareness of research.

Reference

1. Originally, the word compounds "dissertation" and "thesis" (plural, "theses") were not interchangeable. When, at ancient universities, the lector had completed his lecture, there would traditionally follow a disputation, during which students could take up certain points and argue them. The position that one took during a disputation was the thesis, while the dissertation was the line of reasoning with which one buttressed it. Olga Weijers: The medieval disputatio. In: Hora est! (On dissertations), p.23-27. Leiden University Library, 2005.
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