

Emphasizing The Crucial Role of Research in Caribbean Medical Schools

¹Dr. Shilpa.Karkera, Associate Professor, Department of Neuroscience and Anatomy Trinity School of Medicine, Trinity Medical Sciences University, St Vincent and Grenadines.

² Dr. Kelly J Manahan, Associate Dean of Clinical Sciences and Curriculum Trinity School of Medicine, Trinity Medical Sciences University, St Vincent and Grenadines.

³ Dr. Nagadharshan Devendra, Associate Dean of Basic Sciences, Trinity School of Medicine, Trinity Medical Sciences University, St Vincent and Grenadines.

⁴ Mr. Davidson Edward Smith, Term 4 Medical Student., Trinity School of Medicine, Trinity Medical Sciences University, St Vincent and Grenadines.

Date of Submission: 06-04-2024

Date of Acceptance: 16-04-2024

As a member of the medical education community, I am writing to highlight the immense importance of fostering a culture of research within Caribbean medical schools.

The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM-HP) has made significant strides in providing quality training to future healthcare professionals. However, to further elevate the standard and global recognition of Caribbean medical schools, it is imperative to emphasize and prioritize research activities. (1)

Research not only advances the frontiers of medical knowledge but also offers numerous benefits to students, faculty, and the broader medical community. Here are several key reasons why research should be considered a cornerstone of education in Caribbean medical schools:

Enhanced Critical Thinking: Engaging in research cultivates critical thinking skills among medical students. It encourages them to question existing paradigms, analyze evidence, and develop a deeper understanding of medical concepts. Diseases are complex, and finding a universal cure (a "magic bullet") is challenging. However, increasing knowledge through research enables students and faculty to address diseases more effectively, reduce premature deaths, and enhance quality of life. As knowledge grows, ethical considerations become more significant, emphasizing the collective responsibility the medical community carries to be well-informed and work towards the ultimate goal of improving health. (2)

Contribution to Understanding Global Health: Research conducted in Caribbean medical schools has the potential to contribute valuable insights to the global health community. This not only enhances the reputation of the institutions but also positions Caribbean researchers as valuable contributors to the field. (3)

Preparation for Evidence-Based Practice: In the rapidly evolving field of medicine, the ability to incorporate the latest evidence into clinical practice is paramount. Research experience equips students with the skills needed to perform evidence-based decision-making in their future careers.

Attraction of Quality Faculty: A vibrant research environment attracts and retains high-caliber faculty. Faculty members engaged in research bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm for discovery, enriching the educational experience for students. (4)

Global Competitiveness: Medical schools that actively participate in research become globally competitive. Graduates from institutions with a strong research focus are often better positioned for opportunities in residency programs, fellowships, and academic positions worldwide.

I encourage Caribbean medical schools to invest in research infrastructure, provide support for faculty and student research initiatives, and collaborate with international institutions to create a robust research ecosystem. By doing so, we can ensure that Caribbean medical education continues to produce well-rounded, research-savvy healthcare professionals.

References

- [1] <https://caam-hp.org/medical-schools/>
- [2] Kruijff P. The Dignity Of The Medical Profession. *Our Medicine Men*. New York: The Century Co.; 1922. P. 3-18.
- [3] Shryock Rh. Medical Thought And Practice. *Medicine And Society In America: 1660-1860*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 1960. P. 44-82.
- [4] Weatherall D. *Science And The Quiet Art: The Role Of Medical Research In Health Care*. First Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company; 1995