

# The Role of Ophthalmological Society of Pakistan in Research and Development in Ophthalmology in Pakistan

Research is a prescribed method of uncovering or discovering the mysteries of nature. It is therefore truly considered the spring of knowledge and understanding and the only straight road which leads to scientific and technological growth and development.

The knowledge explosion that we have witnessed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is continuing over in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the result of enhanced global commitment and improved ways and means for research and development. The resultant enhanced growth and development has benefited all sectors of knowledge and education including biomedical sciences, with tremendous positive impact on patient care and treatment.

However most of the developing countries are watching with envy the fast growth and development of technologically advanced countries. They have failed to catch up with developed countries for the following interlinked reasons.

1. Lack of vision
2. Lack of national commitment
3. Inability to create systems which govern research from the word go, formulating a research question and leading on to project preparation, conduct, completion, publication and application.

The real question before us is:

Can we do it?, if so how?

What role can the Ophthalmological society of Pakistan play?

The answer to the first question is yes, provided we make a firm national resolution act on the following ten points:

1. Make national commitment.
2. Create national vision
3. Fix national priorities through an in depth consultative process.
4. Create national structures for policy making, implementation, and governance including coordination, collaboration and audit.

5. Create provincial and institutional bodies to support the national bodies.
6. Create national and international linkages.
7. Provide adequate and non discriminatory financial and administrative support to public and private universities and institutions engaged in research.
8. Universities and institutions committed to research must create an enabling environment for research scholars both at home, at the institute and in the laboratory.
9. Research scholars must prepare smart strategies to answer their research questions, publish their research in respectable journals in the prescribed time period. The research scholars should also ensure that the research findings make a base for technological growth and development with impact on the welfare of the society.
10. The top national research scholars must be generously recognized through national awards.

The role of OSP in promoting national research in Ophthalmology and ophthalmic disorders leading to visual disability and /or blindness:

OSP is committed to the following goals and objectives:

1. Enhance the knowledge, skills and attitude of ophthalmologists and ophthalmic allied health personnel.
2. Create opportunities, encourage, support and manage their CME and CPD activities.
3. Create opportunities, encourage and support research and development in ophthalmology and vision sciences.

In order to achieve its 3<sup>rd</sup> goal and objective, OSP has so far taken the following steps:

1. It is encouraging research for residents and fellows in ophthalmology and vision sciences.
2. It is extending financial support for research in ophthalmology and vision sciences through the OSP Research Foundation.

3. To further encourage research in ophthalmology, OSP has created a specific medal for excellence in research which is conferred on deserving scholars on annual basis.
4. To support research in Ophthalmology, it has created a fund called OSP Research Fund.
5. To create opportunities for exchange of research findings among research scholars, OSP arranges four or five regular regional meetings and one national meeting every year. To support publication of research articles, OSP sponsors a national journal of ophthalmology.

**To redouble its efforts in promotion of meaningful research in ophthalmology and vision sciences, OSP may seriously consider taking the following additional steps:**

1. The council may allow and support the formation of an interest group or Pakistan Association for Research in ophthalmology and vision sciences on

the lines of association for research in ophthalmology and vision sciences (ARVO) of USA.

2. The group membership should be open to members from all backgrounds related to ophthalmology and vision sciences.
3. The group will need to be encouraged to create strong national and international linkages.
4. The group will be expected to prepare a strategic plan for promotion of research in ophthalmology and vision sciences under the umbrella of OSP
5. The group will be expected to prepare smart strategies to implement and manage the plan.

It is sincerely hoped that the above road map will put us on a straight road to success and ophthalmology will set yet another trend for others to follow.

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