

*Reports from Bhutan***Bhutan Health Journal: the important that begun well**

The history of modern Medicine in Bhutan dates back to early 1960s, when Royal Institute of Health Sciences (RIHS) was established with aim to train our own home grown health professionals. From small humble shacks to traditional healing, the growth of Modern Medicine and medical services has seen a tremendous leap to the present day tertiary care hospitals with modern amenities culminating in establishment of Medical University, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan in 2012.

With time, as the health education and facilities improved, the overall health status improved too and with it communicable diseases have declined. However, consequent to Bhutan's rapid socio-economic development and lifestyle changes, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) have emerged. Actually, NCDs have exhibited a exponential rise over the years resulting to huge

health expenditure in trying to contain them. Further, coupled with frequent infectious diseases outbreak and sustained low to moderate prevalence of communicable diseases, Bhutan bears the brunt of double burden of diseases. With changing epidemiology of disease pattern, time has come for Bhutan to adopt the evidence based practices to confront the changing demands of societies. The answer to this new phenomenon ultimately lies on promoting research and publications amongst the medical practitioners.

Formulation of policies and programs for improving and sustaining the health care system are best based on evidences generated through research. The good news is that researches pertaining to health and people's wellbeing have been already going on in the country for quite sometime now.



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To have proper Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subject protection, the Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan has established the Research Ethics Board of Health (REBH) in 2009 with the help of The Forum for Ethical Review Committees in the Asian and Western Pacific Region (FERCAP) and Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS) based in Bangkok. All those conducting any health related research/study in Bhutan involving human subjects are required to get prior approval from the REBH. At present, the REBH is recognized by the FERCAP and Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) in USA through the Federalwide Assurance (FWA).

With the establishment of the REBH, it was felt that country needs to have a platform (scientific Medical journal) to share the knowledge among the medical fraternity. In 2010, the health research unit of the Ministry of Health initiated the ground work to establish and launch a research based publication but with no success.

While all efforts to establish a medical journal seemed to go down the drains, there appeared a ray of hope with the establishment of the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan in 2012. Three years on, that small ray of hope turned into reality. In May 2015, the Bhutan Health Journal (BHJ) was launched as an official scientific publication of Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan. Bhutan Health Journal is an international peer reviewed journal that covers a wide range of areas such as clinical, para-clinical, medical

education, nursing and midwifery, traditional medicine, public health, health policy, planning and financing, hospital and health care management, research, publication ethics as well as perspectives from various fields of health sciences envisioned to bring improvement to medical science and health care service in Bhutan.

BHJ is envisaged to become a journal of excellence which focuses on medical research, health care and well-being of the Bhutanese people. This opens up a plethora of opportunities for effective media that would foster exchange of ideas, transfer of knowledge and technology, and promote cooperation in the field of research not just in Bhutan, but also in the region and the global scientific community.

The team at BHJ is proud to put here that the first issue will be launched on 6th November, 2015 in the sideline of launching of 1st international Conference on medical and health sciences 2015 at Thimphu, Bhutan.

Therefore, all the esteemed members of SAAP are requested to contribute with scientific articles from your region to BHJ at : www.bhj.com.bt.

By
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Bhutan
