

RECORD KEEPING AND CLINICAL AND EPIDEMIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The developed countries no doubt have a lead of at least a couple of centuries over us in research and innovation in scientific medicine. Moreover, the developments in medicine paralleled generally the developments in science and technology and improvement in the socio-economic conditions of these countries. As such we have to look to these countries for training of our teachers, high technology equipment procurement and other aids.

We are presently involved in very basic struggles of developing the manpower to provide the benefits of scientific medicine to our population. The entire resources and attention is focused on patient care and curative medicine. As such, no research worth the name has been done though isolated pieces of good scientific information is available. We are presently entirely dependent on the outside world for advances in medical science and shall continue to do so for quite some time. But an essential thing to understand is that research does not mean big Institutes and complicated and computerized equipment. Research is a state of mind that can sustain itself in the slums as well as the palaces.

The basic requirement of good medical care is an accurate and updated record keeping and filing system which also happens to be the basic ingredient of clinical and epidemiological research. Unless the importance of record keeping is realized and a system developed on scientific basis but adapted to local conditions no data collection worth the name will ever take place. Besides being the 'sine qua non' of research, accurate record keeping sensitizes the mind into a state necessary for research and making observations. If nothing else, accurate record keeping has a tremendous value in improving patient care and showing where deficiencies are. So, let the development of accurate and viable record keeping be the subject of our national interest as priority number ONE.

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