

Editorial

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The Academic Clinical scientist – Whither in Nepal!

Even though medical education has made big strides in our country, we are very far behind in the arena of coupling emerging laboratory technologies and advancing patient care.

Advances in the past have largely been empirical and consisted of a trial-and-error approach. In the remote part it was to a large extent intuitive!

Until recently science explained what we observed and then attempts were made to find answers based on observed facts. Today we are living and practicing in an era where therapeutic inventions are emerging from the laboratory rather than the intuition of practitioners. The panorama of potential therapies are emerging in the fields of tissue engineering, gene therapy, biologics and implant designs.

The new era of practitioners (in particular, surgeons of all specialties, and most notably practitioners of musculoskeletal disorders) need to become academic to be able to take full advantage of the new emerging technologies. Their knowledge should assist them to understand the capabilities and limitations of the advances,

as applicable in their particular environment to the advantage of patients.

The clinician-scientist (including orthopaedic surgeons and those of other specialties) is a diminishing commodity not only in the developed world, but more significantly in the resource-constrained societies like ours. The speed with which advances are occurring can translate to benefits for patients only if we have a steady pool of clinician-scientists dedicated to serve patients. Thus, the dire importance of the academic surgeon, even in our challenging clinical scenario.

A survey to determine the current practice trends in the nation amongst specialists both surgical and medical, would be positively informative. Availability of funds to promote academics and research is another major requirement.

The pool of the clinical scientist in Nepal at the current time is truly scarce, probably negligible! Unless we are able to promote more clinical scientists in our various fields, our patients will be further lagging behind to avail of new developments in the advances of health care in our populations.

