From knowledge to practice

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Over the last five decades there has been an explosion of medical knowledge, more than ever before. Unfortunately, current medical practice is often unable to keep pace with this explosion in knowledge. Several innovations have developed to bridge this gap in the transfer of knowledge into practice. For example, the use of simulation-based teaching in the medical curriculum gives an opportunity for students to apply their theoretical medical knowledge in a safe and realistic setting. Simulation-based teaching and learning has thus developed into a valuable educational tool in medical undergraduate programmes. At the clinical practice level, this explosion in knowledge has led to the development of evidence-based medicine, defined as the integration of individual clinical expertise with the best evidence from systematic research, as well as patients’ values and expectations.

Development of clinical practice guidelines and pathways that have been synthesized from results of clinical research have also become very important decision support tools for clinicians. At the community level, translation of research findings into effective implementation requires the use of systematic and strategic approaches. This lecture will review the strategies for implementing research evidence into communities and, in particular, describe two initiatives; Project Echo and Communities of Practice, which aim to provide training and mentoring to clinicians working in rural areas to enable them to deliver the best possible evidence-based clinical care. Finally, the use of technology has been critical in the translation of knowledge into practice at all levels, be it as a medical student, a practising clinician or at the community level.

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