Medical Research policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to create the appropriate structure for scientific research, to disseminate its culture, and to enhance the culture of research and study among students of FMSH, and in the end to improve the health system in Palestine through clinical and translational research.

Scope:

This policy affects medical students in both basic and clinical phases, academic staff at FMHS and Najah National University Hospital (NNUH), scientific research unit, and FMHS.

Policy statement:

The FMHS at An-Najah National University is dedicated to foster the relationship between scientific research and medical education for both students and academic staff. In accordance with the mission of the medical program at FMHS, through research skills, students will gain ability to critically evaluate evidence-based knowledge and develop greater understanding that will improve their professional practice. In addition, medical research that involves students and academic staff is vital in improving care and reducing uncertainty for patients now and in the future and improving the health care system of the population as a whole.

Policy content:

Student- oriented research:

Aims of medical research at FMHS:

Through medical research at FMHS, our students will be able to:

- Better understand published works
- Determine an area of interest
- Jump start their careers as researchers
- Help instill a culture of EBM in clinical practice
- Increase the publication output of their medical school.
- Long term career implications for doctors.

These aims will be achieved through several levels of research education, as follows:

Most of our courses at the basic level of medical program are structured to include mini-projects that fosters students research skills. Moreover, our program has specifically designed research-oriented courses distributed on several years of medical education. These courses are:

- Year 1: Biostats course (3 credit hours), obligatory course.
- Year 2: Basic epidemiology (3 credit hours), obligatory course.
- Year 3: Data Analysis for Health Sciences (2 credit hours), elective course.
- Year 4: Clinical research methods (2 credit hours), obligatory course.
- Year 5,6: Community medicine rotation (5 credit hours, partially), obligatory course.
- Year 5: Introduction to research (0 credit hours) and Research project (6 credit hours), obligatory course.
- Year 6: Implementation of research project.

Medical research at FMHS is supported and organized through scientific research unit (SRU). The vision, mission, objective and resources of the SRU are available in appendix 1.

Mandatory research project for medical program:

In the fifth year, every 2-3 students form a research group, and are mandatory enrolled in introduction to research course (0 credit hours), in which students have to define a research question. Students have to pass this course by a structured process where students and their advisors (a minimum of 2 advisors per project) should apply their research statements and

proposals to the scientific research committee and get an approval to be able to apply for institution review board (IRB, for details see appendix 2) if applicable (this part usually takes place between September and May). As soon as all required steps are passed, the students can start the research project data collection that usually takes place in the sixth year, but also can start earlier. Students who got approval for their research proposal are considered succeeded in the course, otherwise they fail and they have to re-register the course. Students in the sixth year of their studies are enrolled in "*Research Project Course (6 credit hours)*". In this part, students will work on their research projects or continue the work that started earlier.

Projects are conducted in research laboratories at FMSH or at clinical sites such as the hospitals, governmental and private clinics, or in the community, of course after securing all the required permissions and coordination. It worth mentioning that FMHS has a unique funding model locally where each student participating in a project is funded up to $1000 to purchase related devices, and materials and cover lab tests and consumables.

Voluntary research work for medical program:

In accordance with the mission of the FMHS, students are encouraged as early as possible to savor practicing research. Students are encouraged to volunteer in available research project other than the researches conducted through research project course.
Simply, the student shows interest directly to the academic researchers at FMHS towards a certain available project. If the researcher approved the students request, he will inform the SRU director and the student can start the work. In this case, the academic researcher should be aware of the research capacity and experimental skills of the student, and accordingly will assign him riskless and suitable tasks.

Staff- oriented research:

The FMHS gives equal weight to its teaching and research mission and it gives its best to undertake research to very high standards and push to a maximum limit the creation of a research encouraging environment and adapted modern facilities.

Furthermore, the FMHS has a special system for research that aims to organize, encourage and support scientific research in the faculty. This system Supports scientific research in various means keeping in mind giving priority to scientific researches that serves medical development in the Palestinian health care system and in the region. For more details about the system please see appendix 3.

The FMHS welcomes international researches for academic visit and collaboration and encourages its staff to undertake academic staff exchange in both research and teaching. There are several exchange programs available at university level such as Erasmus Plus program, Fulbright and DAAD staff short visit scholarships.

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Appendix:

1. SRU organization
2. IRB
3. The scientific research system at FMHS.

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