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Evolution and Role of Quality Accreditation in Indian Public Healthcare System



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The efficient public health service providing high-quality healthcare is essential for achieving health of the nation by the national health systems. The quality of services can be ensured by quality accreditations, which provide a structured framework for evaluating and enhancing healthcare services. This has become increasingly vital in ensuring that these institutions deliver safe, effective, and patient-centered care. Implementing quality accreditations in government hospitals enhances accountability, transparency, and trust within the healthcare system which creates an environment of continuous improvement.

World Health Organization (2018) emphasizes that quality assurance mechanisms, like accreditation, are essential for health system strengthening, particularly countries that have resources constraints. Numerous studies underscore the positive impact of accreditation on healthcare outcomes. For instance, a systematic review by Al-Amin et al. (2020) highlights that accredited hospitals consistently demonstrate lower rates of adverse events and improved patient satisfaction compared to non-accredited facilities.

Quality accreditations improve clinical outcomes, with better resource management and operational efficiency. A report from the Joint Commission International (2021) indicates that accredited hospitals are more likely to adhere to evidence-based practices, resulting in cost savings and improved utilization of healthcare resources. These benefits collectively underscore the necessity of adopting quality accreditation processes as a strategic approach to enhance the overall effectiveness of government healthcare systems.

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, integrating quality accreditations into government hospitals emerges as a critical step towards improving health outcomes of the population. This article will



present the evolution of quality accreditations in India and hence improve patient care with better health outcomes.

National Health Policy

The National Health Policy (NHP) of India serves as a framework guiding the country's health system and priorities. Introduced in 1983 and revised a second time in 2017, the NHP emphasizes universal health coverage, equity, and the provision of high-quality healthcare services. One of its key components is the integration of quality accreditations in government healthcare facilities.

The evolution of health policies in India has mirrored the changing dynamics of healthcare needs and challenges. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2017 explicitly highlights the importance of quality in healthcare delivery as a fundamental aspect of achieving universal health coverage. It acknowledges that enhancing the quality of services is essential to build trust in the public health system and to ensure better health outcomes for the population.

National Health Mission

The National Health Mission (NHM), launched in 2005, further underscores the integration of quality accreditations into the government healthcare framework. The NHM aims to strengthen healthcare delivery, particularly in rural and underserved areas, by promoting quality standards and ensuring that healthcare

facilities meet accreditation criteria. By providing financial and technical support for accreditation processes, the NHM aligns with the NHP's vision of delivering equitable and quality healthcare to all citizens.

The NHP 2017 clearly states in its objective – Improve health status through concentrated policy action in all sectors and expand preventive, promotive, curative, palliative and rehabilitative services provided through the public health sector with focus on Quality.

Quality Accreditations

Quality accreditation plays a pivotal role in actualizing the objectives set forth by the NHP. The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH), established in 2006, has been instrumental in developing standards that govern the quality of care in healthcare facilities. NABH accreditation is designed to ensure that hospitals adhere to best practices in patient care, safety, and operational efficiency.

Before implementation of NABH accreditation in government hospitals, Health care facilities were exploring the option of implementing quality by adopting International Organization for Standardization (ISO 9001-2015, ISO 15189:2012). However, the success was limited due to lack of direction, leadership and largescale uptake of accreditation in the sector. As of 2021, there has been a significant increase in the number of government hospitals seeking NABH accreditation. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, about 1,000 government healthcare facilities have achieved NABH accreditation, reflecting a growing commitment to quality improvement (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2021).

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India in collaboration with state health departments has developed and implementing a comprehensive quality assurance framework for public health facilities and programs. This Framework comprises of four interrelated approach and activities to achieve patient centric quality system: Instituting Organizational Framework for Quality; Defining Standards of Service Delivery and Patient Care; Continuous Assessment of services against set standards; Improving Quality through closing gaps and implementing opportunities for Improvement.

The framework works on eight principles – Systems approach, Client Focus, Recognizing the champions, Teamwork, Process Focus, Continual Improvement, Objective Quality Measurement, Concern & Context.

In 2013, National Quality Assurance Standards have been developed keeping in the specific requirements for public health facilities as well global best practices. NQAS are currently available for District Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs and Urban PHCs. Standards are primarily

meant for providers to assess their own quality for improvement through predefined standards and to bring up their facilities for certification. The National Quality Assurance Standards are broadly arranged under 8 "Areas of Concern"– Service Provision, Patient Rights, Inputs, Support Services, Clinical Care, Infection Control, Quality Management and Outcome. These standards are International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) accredited and meets global benchmarks in terms of comprehensiveness, objectivity, evidence and rigor of development.

To achieve comprehensive quality and patient safety in public health facilities various accreditation for health facilities was developed in line with the ISQua. These consist of National Quality Assurance Standards for various public healthcare facilities; Kayakalp following Swachh Swath Sarvatra for cleanliness, hygiene and infection control practices; LaQshya for safe delivery by assessing Labour Room & Maternity OT; MusQan for quality childcare services in SNCU, NBSUs, Postnatal wards, Paediatric OPE and Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres. All these are incentive driven activities and accreditations to motivate and sustain the quality standards implementation at public health facilities.

The NQAS is a pro-public health quality model and offers various advantages in comparison with other quality accreditations. These include development of internal quality culture in the facilities, and they have inbuilt quality improvement model. The NQAS is flexible to accommodate the different state criterion, sustainable and scalable. NQAS is cost-effective and evidence-based and offers recognition to the facility. The elements that are assessed are explicit, measurable and transparent to enable these centres consistently enhance their performance.

NQAS is a system of public healthcare facility accreditation that focuses on the functional areas and services delivered and is based on Donabedian model and dimensions of quality. It assesses the listed service area on eight Areas of Concern. These Areas of Concern represented by 1 structure, 2 outcome and 5 on the process of care delivery. The figure below shows the areas of concern. Each area of concern is represented by various Standards, each Standard will have numerous Measurable Elements, and each Measurable Element has numerous Checkpoints. The number of tools for assessment depends on the facility., ie, a Ayusman Arogya Mandir Sub-health Center will have 1 check list and a District Hospital will have 19. The Table.1 below gives the arrangement of different levels of facilities. Kayakalpa awards was launched in 2015 to inculcate a culture of ongoing assessment and peer review of performance related to hygiene, sanitation and infections control. The facilities that show exemplary performance in adhering to the standard protocol would be recognized and incentivized to create a sustainable environment for positive health outcomes.

Type of Facility	Standards	Measurable Elements	Checklists
DH	74	362	19
CHC	65	297	12
PHC	50	250	06
U-PHC	35	200	12
HWC-SC (A)	48	122	01
HWC-SC (B)	50	125	

Table 1. Arrangement at Different Level of Facilities

LaQshya was launched in 2017 to ensure Quality of Care during intrapartum & immediate post-partum period in healthcare facilities. LaQshya with the objective of reduction in the maternal and newborn mortality & morbidity due to occurrence of complication during and immediately after delivery, to improve Quality of Care during the delivery and immediate post-partum care, stabilization of complications and ensure timely referrals, and enable an effective two-way follow-up system to enhance satisfaction of beneficiaries visiting the health facilities and provide Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) to all pregnant women attending the public health facility. It is programmed to benefit every pregnant woman and newborn delivering in public health institutions. The LaQshya program is being implemented at all Medical College Hospitals, District Hospitals, First Referral Unit (FRU), and Community Health Center (CHCs) and will benefit every pregnant woman and new-born delivering in public health institutions.

MusQan was launched in 2021 to ensure provision of quality child friendly services from birth to children upto 12 years of age. MusQan aims to ensure provision of quality child friendly services in public health facilities to reduce preventable newborn and child morbidity and mortality. Under MusQan, multi-prolonged strategy has been adopted for ensuring the gaps in the SNCUs,

Accreditation	Number of facilities
NQAS	1639
LaQshya	564
MusQan	1

Table 2. Facilities with National accreditation

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Figure 1. Areas of Concern in NQAS Assessment

NBSUs, Postnatal wards, Paediatric OPD and Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre against the quality standards traversed within the shortest possible time and visible in quality care services. Despite the progress made, several challenges remain in fully integrating quality accreditation into government healthcare settings. Resource constraints, limited awareness among healthcare providers, and the need for continuous training are significant barriers to achieving widespread accreditation. To address these challenges, it is essential to enhance stakeholder engagement, invest in capacity building, and streamline the accreditation process to make it more accessible for government hospitals.

These accreditations have streamlined the healthcare delivery process, creating a uniform service delivery standard across the healthcare facilities. This uniformity in service delivery has resulted in a tool for comparison of the facilities, motivated providers to scale up their quality practices and increased in adherence to the quality standards. By prioritizing quality in service delivery, the government can not only improve patient outcomes but also foster public trust in the healthcare system, thereby leading to better service delivery and health outcome of the patients.



ACADEMIC PROGRAM

SESSION ON NTEP STATUS IN INDIA AND KARNATAKA: WHO'S ROLE, INNOVATIONS, AND CHALLENGES

As a part of Learning Lab Series, Dr. Kiran, WHO NTEP consultant visited IIHMR Bangalore campus on 21st October 2024 to deliver a session on “NTEP Status in India and Karnataka: WHO's Role, Innovations, and Challenges”. The session focused on the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP) in India, with special attention to Karnataka, highlighted the progress, innovations, and challenges in the country's fight against tuberculosis (TB). Dr. Kiran, emphasizing the key role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in supporting India's TB elimination goals.



WHO's role, Dr. Kiran explained, includes providing technical support, building capacity, and ensuring that India's strategies align with global best practices. She noted that while progress has been made, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to care, particularly in rural areas.

A key innovation discussed was the Nikshya program, a digital platform that tracks TB patients' treatment progress and helps improve care coordination. Dr. Kiran highlighted the success of Nikshya in Karnataka, where it has led to better treatment adherence and reduced patient dropout rates. The session concluded with a call for continued collaboration between government, health authorities, and international organizations to address these challenges.

CAHOTECH CONFERENCE 2024

The 9th edition of the Cahotech Conference 2024, themed “Redefining Healthcare: Technology as the Catalyst for Change,” was held at the JN Tata Auditorium at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. The event was meticulously organized by the students of IIHMR, under the guidance of Dr. Deepashree and Mr. Sachin S. Bhat.

Spanning two days, the conference began on October 25th with a Pitchfest contest and a masterclass for various startups. These startups also set up stalls to showcase their innovative ideas to the delegates and students attending the event.

The main event on October 26th commenced with the arrival of esteemed guests, including the Honourable Health Minister of Karnataka, Mr. Dinesh Gundu Rao, Dr. Devi Shetty, and Mr. Kalyan Sivasailam. Their insightful and inspirational speeches set the tone for the day. The event continued with presentations from other notable dignitaries such as Dr. Pramod Verma, Chief Architect of Aadhaar, Dr. Wonchul Cha, Director of the Data Innovation Centre at Samsung, and Mr. Chris Walker, a leader in technology adoption and enablement. They shared their perspectives on the latest technological innovations in the healthcare system.



The program also featured the introduction of a new medical school and hospital by the Indian Institute of Science. The winners of the Pitchfest were announced, adding to the excitement. The audience was deeply engaged with the impressive array of innovative ideas presented by the startups.

A highlight of the event was the recognition given by Dr. Uma Nambiar to the students and faculty of IIHMR for their efforts in organizing the conference, under the leadership of Director Dr. Usha Manjunath. The event concluded on a high note, with the board members of CAHO expressing their appreciation for IIHMR's contributions, marking the conference as a grand success.

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT IN HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATION: A SITE VISIT

The second year PGDM students of Hospital and Health management specialization visited Narayana Health and Kauvrey Hospitals in Bengaluru as part of their module Materials and Equipment Management. The students got the chance to observe the supply chain management and interact with the officials. The students also experienced the digital systems being used for logistics and inventory management.

The observations from this visit highlight lessons that could be valuable for other healthcare organizations seeking to optimize their operations. The integrated approach to combining traditional supply chain management principles with modern digital solutions provides a model for successful healthcare logistics management in the contemporary environment.



His previous roles include serving as head of operations at HCG cancer hospital, Vizag, and Gleneagles global hospital, Hyderabad. His professional journey began as a Neuro-physiotherapist at Narayana Health, Bangalore.

Challenges such as filtering relevant information amidst overload and maintaining a goal-driven approach have been encountered. These challenges were overcome through skill development, Mentorship, Networking, and a focus on long-term goals. He effectively manages stress through practices like yoga, meditation, trekking, healthy eating, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Future aspirations include contributing to sustainable development goals and engaging in healthcare consulting. He believes that success in managerial roles requires a combination of a birds-eye view and meticulous attention to detail. In healthcare, he envisions improvements such as broader insurance coverage, increased accessibility to advanced care, and the development of sustainable ecosystems through technology.

His advice for future healthcare professionals emphasizes the importance of mentorship, skill development, Networking and staying updated with advancements in the field. He believes that a successful career in healthcare requires clear goals, the right guidance and continuous self-improvement.



Dr. Arabinda Bhol
Head of Operations, HCG Panda
Cancer Hospital, Cuttack, Odisha

Dr. Arabinda Bhol, with over a decade of experience, which currently serves as the head of operations at HCG Panda Cancer Hospital, Cuttack, Odisha. His professional journey has been enriched through diverse roles and numerous achievements.

He completed his schooling at Ravenshaw collegiate school, pursued a Bachelor of Physiotherapy at Swami Vivekananda National institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, and later specialized in Neurology with a Master of physiotherapy from Choudhury Charan Singh university, Meerut. A shift towards hospital administration was made possible through IIHMR Bangalore, inspired by his desire to contribute more significantly to the healthcare sector through administrative decision making.

Currently, he spearheads operations at a 130 bedded super-speciality comprehensive cancer hospital. His leadership has been demonstrated in areas such as core patient care, customer relationship management (CRM), facility management, statutory compliances, and IT infrastructure. Under his guidance, the hospital has received notable accolades, including the “Best unit in operational Excellence” award for two consecutive years and the FICCI Healthcare excellence award for service Excellence in 2024.



CULTURAL EVENTS

TEACHERS' DAY CELEBRATION: A GRAND TRIBUTE TO EDUCATORS

On the occasion of Teachers' Day, students of IIHMR Bangalore hosted an unforgettable celebration to honor the hard work and dedication of its faculty. The day began with a heartfelt ceremony, followed by a series of exciting events designed to entertain and appreciate the teachers.



The highlight was a lively Ramp Walk, where teachers walked with grace to the stage with students cheering up for their favourite teachers, adding a fun to the celebrations. The event was filled with laughter and applause as teachers showcased their talents like impressive dance performances. An enacting competition for teachers showed their acting skills.

Overall, the celebration was a beautiful reminder of the ultimate importance of educators in shaping the future, leaving everyone with lasting memories of joy and gratitude.



CELEBRATING THE FESTIVAL "ONAM"

On September 12th, IIHMR celebrated Onam with great enthusiasm. The campus was beautifully decorated with flowers and a traditional Pookkalam. Students and faculty dressed in traditional Kerala attire where girls wore Kerala saree and guys dressed in veshti, adding to the festive atmosphere.

The day began with Aniket, dressed as King Mahabali, arriving to the beats of the chenda. Cultural activities, including a lively ramp walk, took place in the seminar hall. The highlight was a flash mob by first-year students, which energized everyone.



Outside, a tug-of-war competition among the boys drew cheers. The winners received a bunch of bananas, a traditional Onam prize. Ashin from the first year and Dr. Lakshmi from the second year were the ramp walk winners.

The celebration featured traditional treats like pazhampori, banana chips, and payasam. The day ended with everyone dancing to energetic songs, making it a memorable event for all.

CELEBRATING GANESHA CHATURTHI : A FUSION OF TRADITION AND JOY

IHMR Bangalore's Ganesh Chaturthi celebration was a vibrant event that brought together students, faculty, and staff. The festivities began with the Pratishthapana ceremony, where a beautifully crafted idol of Lord Ganesha was installed amidst traditional music and prayers. Participants offered flowers, incense, and sweets, creating a serene and devotional atmosphere.



The highlight of the celebration was the Visarjan procession on the final day, featuring eco-friendly clay idols. Students sang hymns, danced to drum beats, and carried the idol to the immersion site, emphasizing both joy and environmental consciousness. This celebration fostered a strong sense of community and devotion among all participants.

A GLOW IN THE DARK FRESHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

On October 19th, the eagerly awaited Freshers' Day unfolded with a dazzling "Glow in the Dark" theme. Freshers arrived in neon, glittery, and glamorous outfits, truly lighting up the event. The celebration kicked off in the seminar hall, where the new students showcased their talents through captivating dance and singing performances.

An impromptu Mr. Fresher and Miss Fresher contest added to the excitement, with many first-year students participating. Ultimately, Mr. Ashwini was crowned Mr. Fresher, and Ms. Anjali was crowned Miss Fresher. Following the contest, everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner.

The night concluded with energetic dancing and vibrant music from the DJ, leaving everyone in high spirits and making it a memorable evening for all.



GRAND DASARA - DURGA POOJA CELEBRATIONS

On October 10th, the 8th day of Navaratri, IHMR was abuzz with excitement as it prepared to celebrate the grand festival of Dasara. Students and faculty, dressed in traditional attire, were filled with enthusiasm for the occasion. The celebration began with a small Durga Pooja initiated by the faculty, which instilled a deep sense of devotion among everyone present.

Following the pooja, Samyuktha from the first year delivered an energetic and beautiful dance performance, captivating the audience. The event concluded with a delightful high tea, making it a peaceful and traditional celebration that left everyone with cherished memories.





RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

POSHAN MAAH/NUTRITION WEEK 2024

The Institute of Health Management Research, Bangalore, celebrated Poshan Maah/Nutrition Week 2024 under the theme Anaemia, Growth Monitoring, Complementary Feeding, Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi, Technology for better Governance, and Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam from 2nd to 9th September 2024. A series of engaging activities were organized to raise awareness about diet diversity, healthy eating, and malnutrition prevention. Mothers participated in a 'Making My Child Plate/Poshan Mela', where they arranged a healthy plate for their children using different food group cutouts. Eggs, milk, and khichdi were distributed to children, while a hands-on snack-making session taught kids how to assemble their own nutritious snacks. A Health Spoken Tutorial on complementary feeding and anaemia was conducted, followed by a community plantation drive. Additionally, a Nutrition Snake & Ladder game and a rangoli competition with a nutrition theme were held, combining fun with health education. Prizes were awarded to the community mothers. A total of 141 beneficiaries were reached through this event.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE GIRL CHILD

International Day for the Girl Child was celebrated in Anandapuram and Mayabazar community on 10th of October 2024 marking the day for the vision of empowerment and inspiration. The event actively involved girls through engaging activities such as Musical Chairs and a Balloon Pop game, creatively raising awareness in a fun and interactive manner.

To further boost their self-confidence, all participating girls received a badge and Mehendi, symbolizing their involvement and achievements. The celebration underscored the vision of uplifting and empowering young girls in the community. A total of 55 girls were involved through this initiative.



GLOBAL HAND WASHING DAY

Global Hand Washing Day was celebrated in Anandapuram community on 15th of October 2024 under the theme "Why are clean hands still important?" in collaboration with SOCHARA. The event was a remarkable initiative, featuring Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) parents, community members, 4 HCL Volunteers and 12 SOCHARA Volunteers who took centre stage. The Hosabelaku Kalatanda from SOCHARA, demonstrated effective handwashing techniques and the essential steps to ensure proper hygiene through skit. This interactive approach was a testament to the power of grassroots initiatives and community involvement in promoting good hygiene practices. A total of 102 beneficiaries was reached through this initiative.

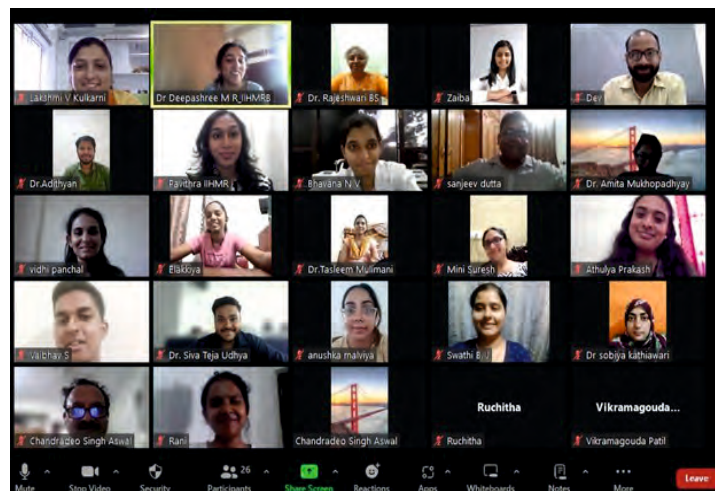




CENTRE FOR LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Scientific Writing For Young Researchers - Sep 19th 2024 – December-5th 2024

The launch of our Professional Practice course on Scientific Writing for Young Researchers Certificate Program at IIMR Bangalore on 19th September 2024 from Program Director Dr. Rajeshwari.B.S, Associate Professor, FPM Coordinator and our esteemed faculty Professor Dr. Amita Mukhopadhyay, for guiding the participants through this valuable journey of Academic excellence which was designed to equip researchers, scholars, and professionals with essential skills to craft impactful and publishable scientific papers, reports, and proposals.



UPCOMING TRAINING PROGRAMS

Executive Program in Managing Digital and Connected Health (In Collaboration with OSLO University and HISP India) 3 Month Live Online Program from December 2024

The Executive Program on Managing Digital and Connected Health is a specialized course designed to equip healthcare professionals, administrators, and technologists with the skills to drive the digital transformation of health systems. The program focuses on leveraging cutting-edge digital and connected health technologies to improve healthcare delivery, patient outcomes, and operational efficiency.

Participants will gain insights into key areas such as:

- Implementing digital health solutions.
- Managing data-driven health ecosystems.
- Integrating connected health tools for improved patient engagement.
- Addressing challenges of cybersecurity and data privacy in healthcare.



Through interactive sessions, case studies, and expert-led discussions, this program enables participants to become leaders in the rapidly evolving digital healthcare landscape.

Advancing Excellence in Clinical Nutrition -December 2024

The Advance Excellence in Clinical Nutrition program is a comprehensive course designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals in the field of clinical nutrition. This program focuses on the critical role of nutrition in disease prevention, management, and overall health optimization.

Key highlights include:

- Evidence-based approaches to therapeutic nutrition.
- Nutrition strategies for managing chronic and lifestyle-related diseases.
- Practical applications in clinical settings.
- Advanced insights into emerging trends and research in clinical nutrition.



Led by experts in the field, the program combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on learning to empower participants to implement effective nutrition interventions, driving improved patient outcomes and advancing their professional practice.

Integrated Digital Intensive Care Management in Collaboration with Cloud Physician Bangalore

The Integrated Digital Intensive Care Management (IDICM) program is a cutting-edge training initiative designed for healthcare professionals involved in critical care management. This hybrid-mode course emphasizes the integration of clinical expertise, advanced technologies, and management principles to optimize intensive care services.

Key program features include:

- Digital transformation in ICU operations.
- EMR and Telehealth
- The Internet of Medical Things (IOMD)
- Blockchain RIS-PACS-DICOM
- Cloud and Edge computing
- Strategies for effective patient monitoring and safety.
- Training in leadership and resource management in high-acuity settings.

Led by experienced faculty, this program equips participants with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care in digitally enhanced intensive care environments.

MDP On Clinical Trial Methods and Protocol Development

The Management Development Program (MDP) on Clinical Trial Methods and Protocol Development is a specialized training initiative from Program Director, Dr. Subodh S Satheesh, Assistant Professor, aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of professionals in designing and conducting clinical trials. This program focuses on equipping participants with comprehensive insights into trial methodologies, regulatory frameworks, and the critical aspects of protocol development.

Led by distinguished resource persons, Mr. Manu Krishnan and Mr. M. S. Ganachari, the program provides a blend of theoretical and practical knowledge, enabling participants to master the nuances of clinical trial design, ethical considerations, and regulatory compliance.

Key highlights include:

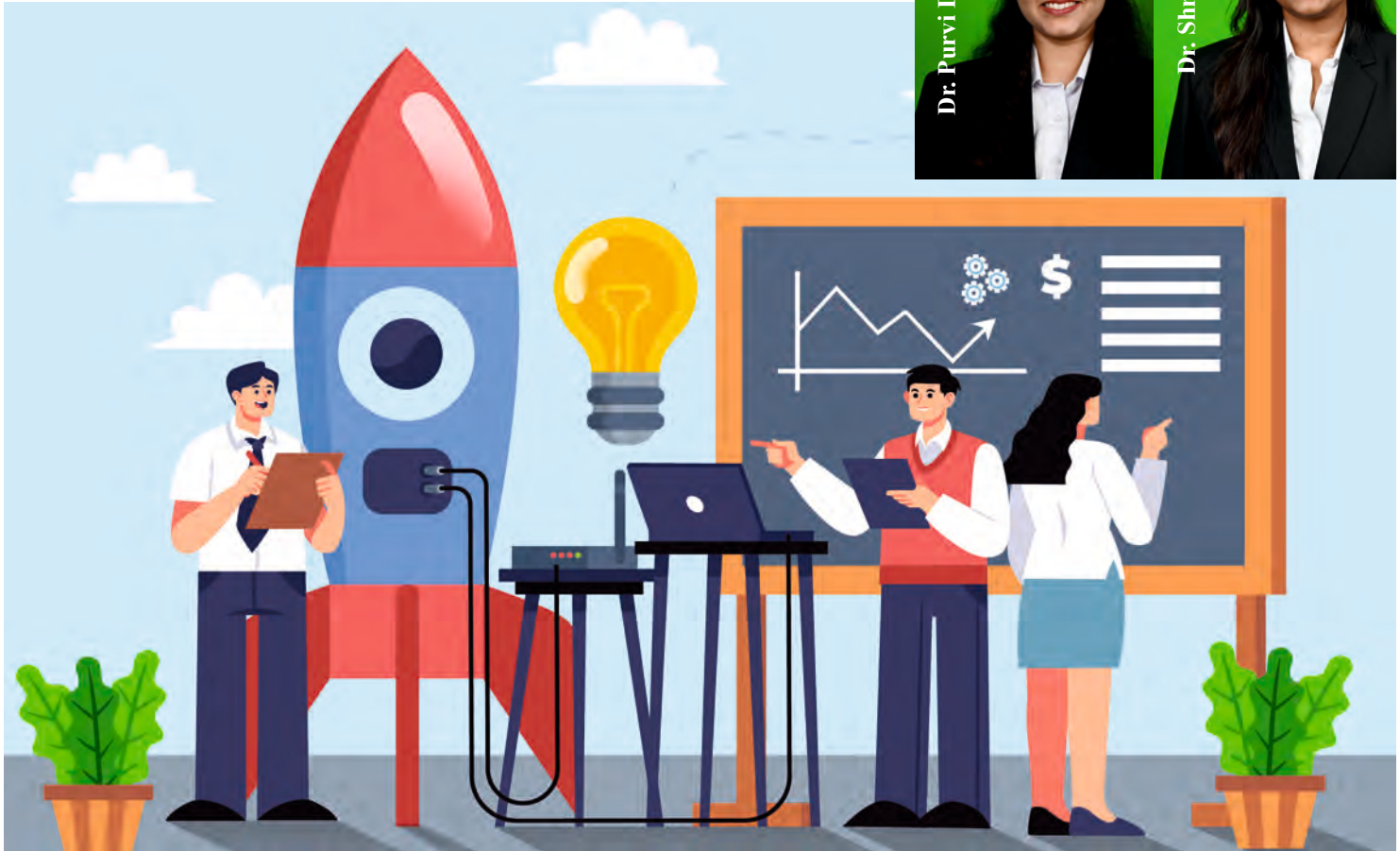
- Understanding clinical trial phases and study designs.
- Crafting robust clinical trial protocols.
- Navigating ethical guidelines and global regulatory standards.

This MDP is ideal for healthcare professionals, researchers, and academicians keen on advancing their expertise in Clinical research and contributing to the evolving field of evidence-based medicine.



FROM ASPIRATION TO ACCOMPLISHMENT: A BLUEPRINT FOR EARLY CAREER SUCCESS

Authors are currently pursuing PGDM (2023-25), IIMB Bangalore



[First presented at 23rd MMA All India Management Students Convention 2024 organized by Madras Management Association (MMA)]

INTRODUCTION:

Success is a very subjective matter, and each person defines it differently. While there is no one size fits all, a successful career involves personal satisfaction, professional growth, financial stability, a positive impact, and a healthy work-life balance.

If we see it objectively and in a more traditional way, career success was measured in high pay, status, regular promotions and the ability to afford luxuries. But over the years it has become more subjective where several studies have revealed that work-life balance, making a positive impact and job satisfaction are equally important in measuring success. (Heslin)

Today's world is highly competitive. Young people are constantly pressured to succeed, whether in school, their careers, or personal goals. Because of globalization, people from all over the world compete for the same opportunities. With so many talented people vying for limited spots in top schools or jobs, the pressure to be exceptional is intense. Many people especially Gen-Z believe that working long hours and constantly striving

for more is the key to success. (Bhui, 2016) This idea, known as 'hustle culture,' makes overwork seem desirable and can lead to exhaustion. The recent death at Pune's EY has sparked public outrage and concerns about workplace stress in India. The incident has led to calls for better working conditions and mental health support for employees.

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this study was to investigate the factors that contribute to jumpstart a successful career and how perceptions of career success have evolved over generations.

METHODOLOGY:

This study involved reviewing relevant literature on career success and conducting qualitative interviews with 60 professionals from diverse industries, ranging from 0 to 30 years of work experience. The professionals were asked to define a "successful career" in their own terms, share their career journeys, and describe the strategies that worked for them, as well as the obstacles they encountered.

Data collection was conducted in English, and responses were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Themes such as career flexibility, continuous learning, networking, perseverance, adaptability, and emotional intelligence emerged from the data and formed the foundation of this study. The insights gained from both the literature and the professionals' experiences helped identify key strategies for building a successful career, which are detailed below.

RESULT:

What It Takes to Jumpstart a Successful Career: Key Themes for Early Career Success

Launching a successful career requires more than just landing a first job—it involves setting a foundation for sustained growth, resilience, and adaptability. In this study, insights from professionals across different industries and stages of their careers were explored to identify key themes that play a pivotal role in jumpstarting a career. These themes are supported by findings from existing literature, offering valuable lessons for those embarking on their professional journeys and seeking long-term success.

Theme 1: Clarity and Flexibility in Career Choices

The balance between having a clear vision and maintaining flexibility was a recurring theme among early-career professionals. Research indicates that while clear career goals can motivate individuals, flexibility is equally important to accommodate changes in job markets and personal circumstances (Dachner et al., 2021). For example, one anaesthesia technologist described how they shifted focus from healthcare technology to hospital administration, illustrating how career paths often evolve over time.

External influences also play a significant role in shaping career choices. A study by Dogan, 2018 found that financial security, family expectations, and societal norms frequently guide early-career decisions. However, as individuals progress, they often find deeper personal fulfilment in their roles, much like the professional who initially pursued medicine for financial reasons but later found passion in the field.

Takeaway: Success is not a straight line. Having a goal can help, but staying flexible to adapt to new opportunities is crucial for jump-starting a career.

Theme 2: The Power of Continuous Learning

Continuous learning is a vital factor in early-career success, especially in fast-changing industries. Research consistently highlights the importance of lifelong learning to stay relevant in competitive job markets (Noe et al., 2017). Several interviewees emphasized that actively seeking certifications, workshops, and higher education early in their careers allowed them to navigate transitions and enhance their expertise.

The transition of a sales professional to machine learning, for example, illustrates the power of continuous education in opening doors to advanced opportunities. Professionals who engage in continuous learning not only adapt better but also demonstrate higher career resilience, according to a study by Gruber et al. (2020).

Takeaway: Continuous learning is a necessity for early-career professionals. It ensures competitiveness and adaptability in a fast-evolving professional landscape.

Theme 3: Building a Network Early

Networking is a powerful tool in career advancement, particularly in the initial stages. Research shows that building professional networks can significantly enhance career prospects by providing access to opportunities, mentorship, and guidance (Ibarra & Hunter, 2007). Several young professionals noted that early networking helped them secure job offers and gain insights from experienced mentors.

According to Seibert et al., 2001, networking plays a critical role in career success by increasing visibility, providing access to information, and creating professional support systems. Even when challenging, those who proactively seek out networking opportunities—such as attending industry events or using platforms like LinkedIn—tend to advance faster in their careers.

Takeaway: Building a professional network early on can open doors to mentorship and opportunities, essential for long-term career success.

Theme 4: Grit, Persistence, and Patience

Success rarely comes overnight. Grit and persistence are essential traits for navigating the inevitable challenges that arise in the initial stages of a career. Duckworth et al., 2007 define grit as perseverance and passion for long-term goals, which correlates strongly with professional success.

One interviewee shared their experience of facing multiple job rejections before finding the right opportunity, emphasizing the importance of persistence. Research supports this view, with studies showing that individuals who remain patient and continue to work towards their goals despite setbacks tend to experience greater long-term success (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, Bailey & Phillips, 2016).

Takeaway: Early-career professionals who exhibit grit and persistence are more likely to achieve long-term success. Career growth takes time, and patience is essential.

Theme 5: Adapting to Change and Embracing New Opportunities

Adaptability emerged as one of the most critical traits for early-career success. Studies indicate that individuals

who embrace change and are open to new opportunities tend to experience faster career growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). One young IT professional described how they initially trained in software engineering but found success in cybersecurity—a field they hadn't previously considered.

The ability to adapt quickly to new roles or industries aligns with research suggesting that adaptability is a predictor of career advancement and job satisfaction (Fugate et al., 2004). The professionals in this study who embraced career shifts, even into unfamiliar areas, found that these transitions often led to more fulfilling and rewarding work.

Takeaway: Adaptability is key to jump-starting a career. Being open to new roles and skill sets can lead to unexpected but rewarding career paths.

Theme 6: Developing Emotional Intelligence Early On

Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an increasingly significant role in career success. Research shows that individuals with high emotional intelligence are more adept at managing workplace relationships, leading teams, and navigating office dynamics (Goleman, 1995). Several young professionals in this study noted that developing EI early in their careers helped them build stronger relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence consists of self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills, all of which contribute to professional success. Early-career professionals who develop these skills are better equipped to handle workplace challenges and are more likely to be considered for leadership roles in the future (Joseph et al., 2015).

Takeaway: Developing emotional intelligence early on is critical for building strong professional relationships and fostering long-term career growth.

CONCLUSION:

The Key Ingredients for Jumpstarting a Career

The findings from this study align with existing literature, reinforcing that successfully jumpstarting a career requires clarity of vision, flexibility, continuous learning, networking, grit, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. Research supports the idea that early-career professionals who embrace these traits are more likely to navigate challenges effectively and create a sturdy foundation for future success.

In conclusion, while talent and ambition are important, the ability to adapt, persist, and build strong relationships is what truly helps professionals thrive in today's ever-changing work environment. For anyone looking to jump-start their career, these themes offer a roadmap for entering and succeeding in the workforce.

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