

Contents

Series Editors' foreword	v	5 Publishing your findings	29
Prefaces	vi	Writing up a research study manuscript	29
Acknowledgements	viii	Submitting a manuscript for publication	32
Series Editors' acknowledgements	ix	Dealing with a rejected manuscript	34
		Further reading	36
Section 1 The essentials for career success	1	6 Writing a successful curriculum vitae	37
1 An introduction to research, audit and teaching	3	Is a curriculum vitae necessary?	37
Book purpose	3	What is a curriculum vitae?	37
Research methodology	3	Writing an effective curriculum vitae	37
Audit and its loop	3	Style and formatting	42
Teaching theory and practice	4	Common mistakes	42
The essentials for career success	4	Further reading	42
Further reading	4		
2 Evidence-based medicine	5	Section 2 Research methodology	43
What is evidence-based medicine?	5	7 Handling data	45
Formulating clinical questions	5	Types of variables	45
Identifying relevant evidence	6	Types of data	46
The search strategy	6	Displaying the distribution of a single variable	47
Search terms	7	Displaying the distribution of two variables	49
Reviewing the search strategy	7	Describing the frequency distribution: central tendency	51
Critically appraising the evidence	9	Describing the frequency distribution: variability	53
Evaluating performance	10	Theoretical distributions	54
Creating guideline recommendations	10	Transformations	57
Further reading	11	Choosing the correct summary measure	59
		Further reading	60
3 How to get involved	13	8 Investigating hypotheses	61
Opportunities for research	13	Hypothesis testing	61
Types of projects	14	Choosing a sample	61
Identifying the gap in the evidence	15	Extrapolating from sample to population	62
Finding a research supervisor/research group	16	Comparing means and proportions: confidence intervals	66
Project funding	16	The <i>P</i> -value	69
Advice for someone considering a career in academic medicine	17	Statistical significance and clinical significance	69
Further reading	18	Statistical power	70
		References	76
		Further reading	76
4 Presenting your research findings	19	9 Systematic review and meta-analysis	77
Submitting an abstract for presentation	19	Why do we need systematic reviews?	77
Selecting the right conference	19	Evidence synthesis	78
Writing an abstract	20	Meta-analysis	78
Poster presentations	22	Presenting meta-analyses	81
Oral presentations	24	Evaluating meta-analyses	81
Answering audience questions	27	Key example of a meta-analysis	84
Further reading	28	Reporting a systematic review	85
		References	88
		Further reading	88

Contents

10 Research design	89	16 Case report and case series	157
Obtaining data	89	Background	157
Interventional studies	90	Conducting a case report	157
Observational studies	90	Conducting a case series	158
Clinical trials	91	Critical appraisal of a case series	159
Bradford-Hill criteria for causation	92	Key examples of case reports	159
Choosing the right study design	94	Key example of a case series	159
Further reading	96	References	160
11 Randomized controlled trials	97	Further reading	160
Why choose an interventional study design?	97	17 Qualitative research	161
Parallel randomized controlled trial	97	Study design	161
Confounding, causality and bias	102	Organizing and analysing the data	163
Interpreting the results	104	Validity, reliability and transferability	164
Types of randomized controlled trials	107	Advantages and disadvantages	164
Key example of a randomized controlled trial	109	Key example of qualitative research	165
Reporting a randomized controlled trial	109	References	166
References	114	Further reading	166
Further reading	114	18 Confounding	167
12 Cohort studies	115	What is confounding?	167
Study design	115	Assessing for potential confounding	
Interpreting the results	116	factors	167
Confounding, causality and bias	118	Controlling for confounding factors	168
Advantages and disadvantages	122	Reporting and interpreting the results	170
Key example of a cohort study	122	Key example of study confounding	170
References	124	References	171
Further reading	124	Further reading	171
13 Case-control studies	125	19 Screening, diagnosis and prognosis	173
Study design	125	Screening, diagnosis and prognosis	173
Interpreting the results	128	Screening tests	173
Case study: risk of constrictive pericarditis		Example of a screening test using likelihood ratios	177
after acute pericarditis	129	Diagnostic tests	177
Confounding, causality and bias	130	Evaluating the performance of a diagnostic test	178
Key example of a case-control study	134	The diagnostic process	180
References	136	Example of a diagnostic test using predictive values	184
Further reading	136	Bias in diagnostic studies	186
14 Measures of disease occurrence and		Prognostic tests	187
cross-sectional studies	137	References	190
Measures of disease occurrence	137	Further reading	190
Study design	140	20 Statistical techniques	191
Interpreting the results	142	Choosing appropriate statistical tests	191
Confounding, causality and bias	143	Comparison of one group to a hypothetical value	193
Key example of a cross-sectional study	146	Comparison of two groups	193
References	148	Comparison of three or more groups	195
Further reading	148	Measures of association	195
15 Ecological studies	149	Further reading	197
Study design	149	21 Economic evaluation	199
Interpreting the results	150	What is health economics?	199
Sources of error in ecological studies	152	Economic question and study design	200
Key example of an ecological study	154	Cost-minimization analysis	201
References	155	Cost-utility analysis	202
Further reading	155	Cost-effectiveness analysis	208

Cost-benefit analysis.....	210
Sensitivity analysis.....	210
Further reading.....	214
22 Critical appraisal checklists.....	215
Critical appraisal.....	215
Critical appraisal checklist: systematic reviews and meta-analyses.....	217
Critical appraisal checklist: randomized controlled trials.....	218
Critical appraisal checklist: diagnostic studies.....	218
Critical appraisal checklist: qualitative studies.....	219
Further reading.....	220
23 Crash course in statistical formulae.....	221
Describing the frequency distribution.....	221
Extrapolating from 'sample' to 'population'.....	221
Study analysis.....	221
Test performance.....	223
Economic evaluation.....	224
Further reading.....	224
Section 3 Audit and its loop: the modern approach to improving healthcare practice.....	225
24 Clinical audit.....	227
An introduction to clinical audit.....	227
Planning the audit.....	228
Choosing the standards.....	229
Audit protocol.....	229
Defining the sample.....	230
Data collection.....	230
Analysing the data.....	231
Evaluating the findings.....	231
Implementing change.....	232
Example of a clinical audit.....	232
Further reading.....	234
25 Quality improvement.....	235
Quality improvement versus audit.....	235
The model for quality improvement.....	235
The aim statement.....	236
Measures for improvement.....	236
Developing the changes.....	237
The plan-do-study-act cycle.....	237
Repeating the cycle.....	238
Example of a quality improvement project.....	238
Further reading.....	243
Section 4 Teaching Theory and Practice.....	245
26 Medical education.....	247
Introduction.....	247
Learning perspectives/theories.....	247
Optimizing learning.....	251
Further reading.....	252
27 Designing a teaching session and teaching programme.....	253
Effective teaching session design.....	253
Setting objectives.....	253
Setting up a teaching programme.....	256
Further reading.....	257
28 Teaching methods.....	259
Teaching small groups.....	259
Teaching in the clinical environment.....	261
Teaching large groups/lecturing.....	263
Further reading.....	265
29 Teaching materials.....	267
The purpose of teaching materials.....	267
Different types of teaching materials.....	267
Social media.....	268
Factors influencing the type of teaching material to use.....	268
Creating effective teaching materials.....	268
Further reading.....	269
30 Evaluation, assessment and feedback.....	271
Evaluation.....	271
Assessment.....	272
Feedback.....	275
References.....	277
Further reading.....	277
31 Dealing with the student in difficulty.....	279
Recognition.....	279
Consultation.....	279
Interventions and follow-up.....	280
Further reading.....	280
Self-Assessment.....	281
Single best answer (SBA) questions.....	283
Extended-matching questions (EMQs).....	293
SBA answers.....	301
EMQ answers.....	309
Glossary.....	317
Index.....	321

An introduction to research, audit and teaching

1

Every person who becomes a patient expects their consulting doctor to have an up-to-date working knowledge of the causes and treatment of disease in order to accurately diagnose and manage their care. All patients expect their doctor to be able to weigh up the scientific evidence that is relevant to their particular condition or disease, and to recommend the best management strategy for them. In order for doctors to act in the patient's best interests, they need to be able to understand the research evidence available in their area of practice. All doctors should also be able to advise their patient on new areas of research which may be of relevance to their condition, and of active studies which may potentially question the effectiveness of current treatment strategies. Patients are also becoming a lot more knowledgeable and sophisticated and are able to appreciate that doctors who are involved in research have an aim to build on current clinical knowledge which may one day lead to improvements in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.

BOOK PURPOSE

This book aims to provide the knowledge and teach the skills to allow readers to provide high standards of patient care, achieving career success in the process. This involves having a clear understanding of essential scientific methods, principles and techniques. To achieve this, it is crucial that both undergraduate students and postgraduate doctors are equipped with the scientific skills to enable lifelong learning. The importance of acquiring these fundamental academic skills was highlighted in a report by Professor Sir Bruce Keogh. He found that hospital doctors who were more research-oriented and research-led were more likely to demonstrate high quality care. The following four sections of this book will provide you with the DNA to enable you to deliver safe and effective care to your patients:

- Research methodology
- Audit and its loop: the modern approach to improving healthcare practice
- Teaching theory and practice
- The essentials for career success

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Medical research encompasses 'basic science research' (also called bench science), which involves developing our understanding of more fundamental scientific principles, to clinical research, which is distinguished by the involvement of patients. The purpose of research is to discover better ways to treat and prevent disease and advance knowledge for the good of society. Undergraduate and postgraduate training are founded on established evidence through research and practice. The delivery of care to patients by healthcare professionals is based on decisions made from the best available evidence to inform diagnostic and management plans in order to meet patient needs. If there is limited evidence available in a particular area, it is the responsibility of the doctor to systematically search for it, evaluate it for scientific validity and determine whether it is applicable with respect to the decision required for the care of their patient. Every practising doctor should therefore maintain up-to-date knowledge relevant to their specialty and understand how to correctly evaluate and apply available evidence. This encompasses a key skill in being able to understand and critique statistical analyses. Overall, this forms a General Medical Council (GMC) Good Medical Practice principle, stating that doctors should 'provide effective treatments based on the best available evidence'. This principle should not be perceived as an option.

AUDIT AND ITS LOOP

Clinical audit, which is at the heart of clinical governance, involves reviewing the quality of current medical practice against explicit criteria for expected healthcare standards. Healthcare professionals should be actively involved in clinical governance to improve the quality of patient care. While clinical research aims to establish what is the best or most effective practice, clinical audit evaluates how closely local practice resembles this. Audit (and quality improvement) forms a key pillar of clinical governance, encouraging services to make better use of resources and therefore become more efficient. The data you gather during the audit process can be used to inform patients about the standard of care they are receiving. Audits may generate new research questions, which may subsequently be investigated using a

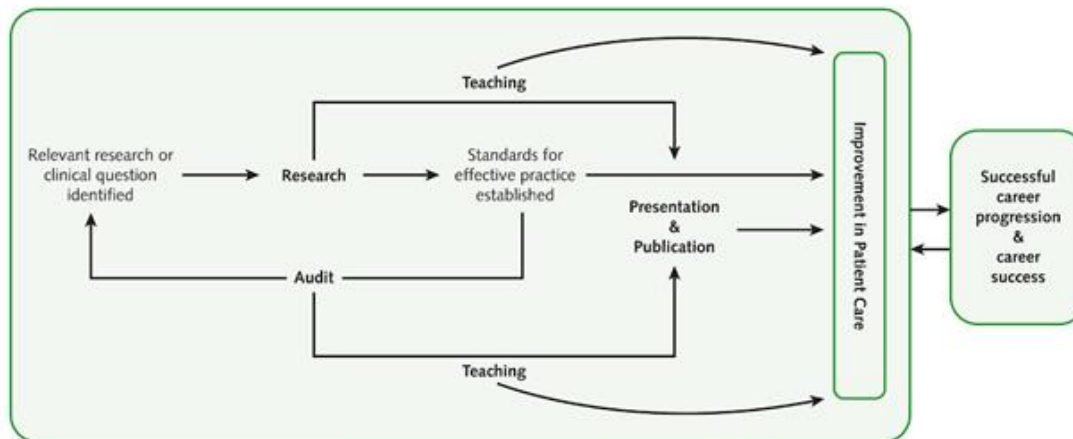


Fig. 1.1 The model for career success

research protocol. Audit and research may therefore follow each other in a continuous cycle. In an era where training doctors in management is often criticised, audits offer a good platform to learn about service provision and improvement.

as improve your communication skills, which may translate to improved interactions with patients.

TEACHING THEORY AND PRACTICE

The word 'doctor' means 'teacher' or 'learned one', and is derived from the Latin word *docere*, to teach. The GMC mandates that doctors have a professional obligation to contribute to the education and training of other doctors, medical students and nonmedical healthcare professionals on the team. Teaching activities allow you to consolidate and improve your knowledge in an area of interest, as well

THE ESSENTIALS FOR CAREER SUCCESS

Fig. 1.1 illustrates how the different sections of this book are all linked together to form a model for career success. Recruitment panels recognize the importance of research, audit, teaching and publications, with a significant number of points awarded to these activities as part of your future job applications. The skills you will acquire by the end of this book will enable you to not only provide good medical care, as defined by the GMC, but also allow you to successfully advance on the career ladder in order to reach your potential. Good luck!

Chapter Summary

Clinical practice hones many skills that make doctors suited to research, such as teamwork, communication and analytical thinking. While not everyone should choose to pursue a long-term career in research, any time spent in research is valuable, as it will equip you with many different skills, including:

- Systematic reviewing and critical appraisal
- Numeracy (including an understanding of statistics)
- Evidence synthesis
- Communication (through teaching and publications)

FURTHER READING

British Medical Association (BMA), 2015. Every doctor a scientist and a scholar. Available from: <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/applying-for-a-job/every-doctor-a-scientist-and-a-scholar> [Accessed 21st September 2018].

Evidence-based medicine

2

WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED MEDICINE?

Sackett and colleagues describe evidence-based medicine (a.k.a. 'evidence-based practice') as 'the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients'. Considering the vast rate at which medical knowledge is advancing, it is crucial for clinicians and researchers to make sense of the wealth of data (sometimes poor) that is available. Evidence-based medicine involves a number of key principles, which will be discussed in turn:

- Formulate a clinically relevant question
- Identify relevant evidence
- Systematically review and appraise the evidence identified
- Extract the most useful results and determine whether they are important in your clinical practice
- Synthesize evidence to draw conclusions
- Use the clinical research findings to generate guideline recommendations, which enable clinicians to deliver optimal clinical care to their patients
- Evaluate the implementation of evidence-based medicine

HINTS AND TIPS



Evidence-based practice is a systematic process primarily aimed at improving the care of patients.

FORMULATING CLINICAL QUESTIONS

The initial step in practising evidence-based medicine involves converting a clinical encounter into a clinical question. A useful approach to formatting a clinical (or research) question is using the Patient Intervention Comparison Outcome (PICO) framework. An example is provided in Box 2.1. The question is divided into four key components:

- *Patient/Population:* Which patients or population group of patients are you interested in? Is it necessary to consider any subgroups?

BOX 2.1 PICO MODEL

CLINICAL ENCOUNTER

John, 31 years old, was diagnosed with heart failure 3 years ago and prescribed a β -blocker which dramatically improved his symptoms. John's 5-year-old daughter, Sarah, has been recently diagnosed with chronic symptomatic congestive heart failure. John asks you, Sarah's paediatrician, whether his daughter should also be prescribed a β -blocker. Is there a role for β -blockers in the management of heart failure in children?

Patient	Children with congestive heart failure
Intervention	Carvedilol
Comparison	No carvedilol
Outcome	Improvement of congestive heart failure symptoms

- *Intervention:* Which intervention/treatment is being evaluated?
- *Comparison/Control:* What is/are the main alternative/s compared to the intervention?
- *Outcome:* What is the most important outcome for the patient? Outcomes can include short- or long-term measures, intervention complications, social functioning or quality of life, morbidity, mortality or costs.

Not all research questions ask whether an intervention is better than existing interventions or no treatment at all. From a clinical perspective, evidence-based medicine is relevant for three other key domains:

- *Aetiology:* Is exposure to a particular agent or environment a risk factor for developing a certain condition?
- *Diagnosis:* How good is the diagnostic test (history taking, physical examination, laboratory or pathological tests and imaging) in determining whether a patient has a particular condition? Questions are usually asked about the clinical value or the diagnostic accuracy of the test (discussed in Chapter 19).