

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Importance of belonging to research groups and collaborative work in neonatology

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To the Editor,

Neonatology is currently regarded as a highly specialized field of medicine, playing a significant role in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (1). By 2030, this United Nations initiative aims to reduce infant mortality through specialized care in critical situations and promote the overall well-being of newborns. These complex challenges require multidisciplinary and innovative approaches, necessitating active collaboration among work groups and research networks across related specialties. This letter aims to emphasize the importance of these two practices for advancing neonatal care.

Research enables us to answer questions that arise during patient care and guides us toward optimal practices, directly impacting health outcomes. Participation in any phase of the research process allows healthcare professionals to systematically investigate clinical questions, gather data, and acquire knowledge that leads to more effective decision-making. This process not only enhances the quality of care provided to individual patients but also contributes to the broader medical knowledge base. Research is a cornerstone of evidence-based healthcare, driving innovations that lead to continuous improvements in patient care (2).

Collaboration within institutional research groups enriches these activities by offering a comprehensive perspective. These partnerships not only expand and deepen medical research but also foster a culture of interinstitutional cooperation and respect, accelerating progress and significantly improving patient outcomes. Medical research has experienced remarkable growth through collaboration among diverse research groups. This teamwork creates a strong foundation to incorporate experiences from diverse contexts, enabling us to explore complex medical problems from multiple viewpoints. Collaboration is essential in neonatology, where we face unique challenges and diseases with low prevalence. Neonatal research groups allow us to accumulate a substantial number of cases, which is crucial for achieving statistically significant research outcomes. This data collection is greatly enhanced through networks of collaboration between institutions, improving the quality and reliability of our findings.

Nowadays, easy access to information and technology demands a constant commitment to staying up to date with scientific advances published in the literature. Additionally, exchanging ideas among peers is crucial, facilitating access to the latest scientific information and evidence. Work groups foster the development of collaborative efforts, where clinical team experiences (3) and the application of evidence-based medicine provide tools to address problems from different angles, resulting in effective and applicable solutions in clinical practice, such as teaching guides or guidelines (4).

There are various research groups focused on neonatology that prioritize evidence-based recommendations and collaborative efforts. One such group is the Respiratorio y Surfactante group (RESPISURE, by its Spanish acronym) of the Spanish Society of Neonatology (5), which aims to propose, evaluate, reach consensus on, and promote projects related to neonatal respiratory pathology. Similarly, the Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Study Group of the University of Texas (CDHSG) (6) was established in 1995 and now includes 142 hospital centers across 18 countries and 6 continents, having collected data from over 12,000 neonates and published more than 50 articles. The objective of this group is to share experiences and promote good clinical practices by encouraging new lines of research. In South America, the NEOCOSUR Network, established in 1997, consists of 36 centers across 5 countries and aims

Cite as:

Samanez Obeso AF, Zegarra Ramos AV, Concha Moreno MN. Importance of belonging to research groups and collaborative work in neonatology. *Investig Innov Clin Quir Pediatr.* 2024;2(2):69-70. doi:10.59594/iicqp.2024.v2n2.106

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Received : 05/31/2024

Accepted : 07/09/2024

Published : 07/31/2024



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to evaluate and promote evidence-based clinical practices, develop predictive tools, and design and conduct controlled studies.

One of the key advantages of collaborative research is the ability to compare experiences and outcomes systematically. This approach allows us to identify patterns and anomalies that might be overlooked in individual studies, which is especially valuable for understanding the nuances of rare diseases, where individual case studies may not provide a complete picture. In addition to accelerating the pace of medical discovery, collaborative research in neonatal medicine nurtures an altruistic and noble spirit among medical professionals. Working together toward common goals fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, distancing professionals from self-centered mindsets and prioritizing collective welfare over individual recognition.

In conclusion, international collaboration is essential for advancing research and education in neonatology in an increasingly interconnected global context. We recognize that exchanging information among healthcare professionals is critical for achieving significant improvements across all medical specialties and subspecialties. We can only enhance clinical practices and optimize healthcare services in each specialty by feeding common databases and sharing statistical data and clinical experiences.

Author contributions

Conceptualization: AFSO; Data collection, management, and curation: AFSO, AVZR, MNM; Drafting of the original version: AFSO, AVZR, MNM; Drafting and revision of the final version: AFSO, AVZR, MNM.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the material presented in this manuscript.

Funding

This study was self-funded.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

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