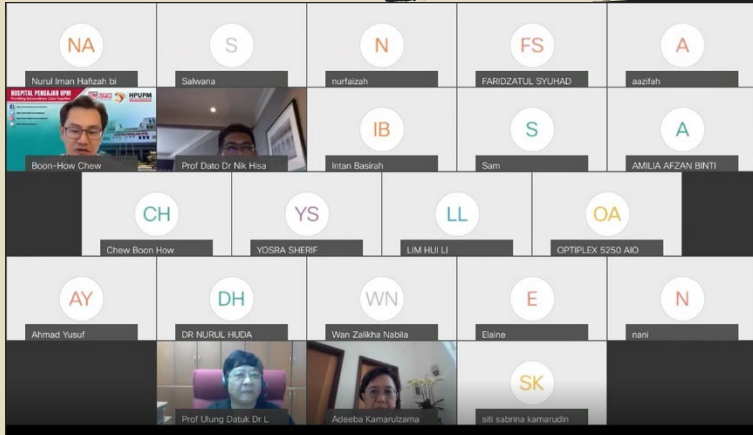


# GOOD SCIENCE IN CLINICAL TRIALS

Keypoints from the forum discussion with Prof Dato' Dr. Nik Hisamuddin Nik Ab Rahman, Prof. Dato' Dr. Adeeba Binti Kamarulzaman and Datuk Prof. Dr. Looi Lai Meng in conjunction with International Clinical Trials Day 2022

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Clinical research and clinical trials enterprise and ecosystem have progressed much from middle to late of last century. We have higher proportion of clinical researchers, conducted larger number of research, and published more in the medical journals. However, comparing to the progresses that is also achieved by other countries we are not considered to have attained milestones that could be very proud of. We could or should do much in collaborative research, international impactful trials, write and publish better reports. There is serious shortcoming of investigator-initiated trials as compared to many industry-sponsored clinical trials. This causes lacking in relevant research and evidence of solution much needed for day-to-day problems in the clinical practice, patient's health and community wellbeing. The possible causes to this are many.

The existing clinical research ecosystem is to be more supportive and resourceful in terms of providing the necessary coordination to clinical researchers in conducting the demanding clinical research, and availability of funding and grants in different aspects and at different levels that allow higher ceiling of remuneration scale to attract better quality research-related professionals and personnel such as project managers, research assistants and enumerators.

## ON PRESENT RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

- Supportive ecosystem
- Funding and hiring of quality research workers
- Research knowledge and skills
- Networking and collaboration

## ON OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

- Top-down changes- more understanding
- Appreciate different inclinations and not all academics are researchers
- Collaboration to overcome time, expertise and resource constraint
- Proactive in reaching to others

## ON GROWING TO BECOME HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCHER

- Start with small research
- Can participate in a big project
- Focus on area of interest and research with passion not for KPI
- Learn good science and cultivate good personal characters

SUMMARY

A better of this in addition to a more encouraging research policy would retain, groom and breed high-quality researchers in Malaysia. Also, within- and between-institution networking crossing disciplines and sectors that facilitate research collaboration has to be activated. Teaching institutions, universities and teaching hospitals and their related units related to clinical research could communicate more effectively and share resources such as in having mutual recognition in ethical approval for multicentre research proposals/projects.

The above-mentioned challenges of supportive research ecosystem and lacking in funding, collaborative research activity, policy that pro the conduct of clinical research and hiring of research personnel were followed by possible short-term and long-term solutions. As these challenges are complex, it is perceived that top-down policy change in creating a conducive research ecosystem would impact it at a greater magnitude. Additionally, the working system in which the clinical researchers, academicians and clinicians are to be instilling inspiration and encouragement into a career track that they are good at and not punitive for not achieving certain pre-set KPI in research. When friendly and supportive environment is present, creativity and innovative, relevant and important research could be expected over time. Certainly, this process can be monitored and its positive outcome enhanced by having senior colleagues who are experienced researchers to mentor the junior who are given protected time in developing their knowledge and skills in the areas of interest. The path towards becoming a star-researcher of great renown and success nationally and internationally should not begin aiming solely at the KPI disregarding the good principles in science, sound scientific methodology in research, proactive habits in reaching out to other like-minded researchers, and good personal characters when dealing with collaborators.

On the positive advice and of greater importance is for every researcher to remember the original motivation as an academician or researcher which is typically to research to learn about problems and to find new knowledge or solution to the immediate problems in our life circle. Working sincerely and genuinely for the pure passion of working on research for what it is, and do it well would lead all researchers to the higher ground of satisfaction and ultimately recognition. Nevertheless, practical factors are required for high-quality researchers to thrive. At the personal level, successful researchers are keen and motivated researchers who never give up learning about research methodology, epidemiology and statistics. They are also eager to collaborate and willing to find time to spend on research. At the institution level, the working system of assessment and rewards should be equitable, fair and transparent to all academicians who are indeed **can be** skilled not in research but in teaching or clinical duties. Administrators and policymakers would be helpful to clinical researchers to be more aware of the unmet needs of researchers, show true understanding of the whole process of a clinical research and provide timely affirmation and practical support.