



## Finding Your Inspiration (amidst an environment of work and requirements)

We are all busy. Our clinical work and administrative responsibilities do not stop. A lot of times, they are overwhelming and tend to overtake our schedules. Yes, we all wish for more time with family and "me time" seem to be always elusive. So, how can we allot the appropriate time for research? To think of good topics worth pursuing, to actually complete them, do the write ups, present them in scientific gatherings, and publish them...? You are wise if you can answer these dilemmas.

I always ask those questions each time the *Scientific Proceedings* is due to come out. I, too, dread deadlines. I do not like the idea of someone constantly nagging me to submit my work so that an issue will come out on time. I always look at my other tasks and justify to myself that there are just more important things to do. This particular task can wait. Most of the time, that will just be wishful thinking.

A lot of interventions are already being implemented in some hospitals to address the above relevant issue. Primarily, it is recommended and being pushed to assure trainees of a "free time" for them to be able to concentrate on research outputs. The main idea is for such periods to be deliberately interwoven into their training program. This time will be solely utilized for research activities—crafting ideas and turning them into actual protocols, data gathering and analysis, meetings with research advisers, and related matters. This was conceived to be injected at strategic points into the program. Good idea. However, the realities will not always be encouraging. I am aware that these periods are not maximized as far as the trainees' research progress is concerned. It is being used more for breaks and "vacation time." It is used more to catch up on other training related matters like reading up on clinical topics and administrative works. Honestly, I am uncertain if this idea was actually achieving its main intention in the first place. However, I also know that some trainees are utilizing this to have some research work done. *Nagagamit din naman sa tamang paraan.* So, maybe we need more time and monitoring to assess if this idea is worth maintaining or even further developing.

One may be inspired if they have research mentors to guide them through the entire process. I laud the Clinical Research Department in introducing this innovation. Identifying potential role models for trainees will certainly be a huge factor as they navigate the research track. Having persons who have "been there, done that" will be a tremendous boost to hopefully encourage them that what they are embarking on can actually be done until publication. That all their efforts and energy will be worth it and the outcome will truly be a source of pride and unique achievement. Mentors will have a significant impact on the lives of these budding researchers. They may uncover some hidden talent or passion for research in the trainee. Their "research bone or DNA" may be awakened. Hmmmm... why not? Majority of the established investigators I know started out this way. They needed some spark that may ignite their research



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alter ego. I am extremely interested to pursue and support this idea. It is worth the investment.

For me, inspiration for seeing your research through can be found in the things which are already in front of us:

- Seeing others actually finish their research, including witnessing their presentation, and reading their published work. *Kung kaya nang iba, kaya ko rin dapat.*
- Encountering a clinical scenario then you begin to ask a lot of questions. All the "why's" and "how's." An inquisitive mind may be the start of something phenomenal.
- Attending a scientific conference and witnessing firsthand from the presenter matters that you actually thought of... but actually, failed to pursue. *Di ba, sayang...? Nakapanghihinayang.*
- Look at the research awards displayed in your institution. The ones posted on the walls. The trophies and plaques in the display cabinets. Behind those items are the hard grind and persistence of those winners. I always find those things inspiring. What is doubly inspiring is the story behind those awards.
- Look at the other people that are traversing similar pathways. You are being looked at as a possible "idol" in research. Be inspired to deliver because you also owe it to them. Unknowingly, you are being seen as a role model.

Inspirations abound. One just has to be ready and observant. We can even create our own motivation for churning out a relevant work. You can always revisit that inner passion why you began doing research and hopefully was seeing it beyond just being a "requirement."

Be inspired. Deliver more than what is expected from you. We need your research.