

FROM CLASSROOM TO CLINIC: BRIDGING THE RESEARCH EXPOSURE GAP FOR ALLIED HEALTH STUDENTS

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To the Editor,

The foundation of modern healthcare is built on evidence-based practice, yet a persistent disconnect exists between academic research training and its practical application among allied health students. As healthcare systems grow more complex and outcomes-driven, the ability of allied health professionals to understand, interpret, and contribute to research has become essential [1,2]. However, for many students, research remains an abstract academic requirement rather than a meaningful clinical tool, creating a significant gap between classroom learning and real-world practice.

Allied health education often introduces research as a theoretical component, emphasizing methodology, statistics, and dissertation completion. While these elements are important, they frequently fail to translate into practical research competence or confidence. Students may graduate having fulfilled curricular requirements, yet remain uncertain about how research informs clinical decision-making, improves patient outcomes, or guides professional practice [3]. This gap becomes especially apparent during clinical training, where research engagement is limited by time constraints and service-oriented priorities [4].

Bridging this research exposure gap requires intentional integration of research throughout allied health education and clinical training. Research concepts should be contextualized within clinical learning, allowing students to critically appraise literature, participate in audits, and engage in small-scale projects related to patient care and service improvement.

Early exposure to such activities fosters analytical thinking, curiosity, and a strong sense of professional ownership over evidence-based practice. Equally important is mentorship from educators and clinicians who actively model the value of research in everyday healthcare settings [2]. In conclusion, empowering allied health students with meaningful research exposure is an investment in the future of healthcare. By transforming research from a theoretical obligation into a practical, clinically relevant skill, educators and institutions can cultivate professionals who are not only competent practitioners but also critical thinkers and contributors to evidence-based care. Bridging the gap from classroom to clinic is not merely an educational challenge—it is a professional imperative that will shape the quality, safety, and sustainability of allied health practice in the years to come.

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