

Editorial

Clinical Researchers vs. Research Clinicians: Impact on Healthcare Research in Pakistan

Bilal Umar¹ 

1. Link Medical Interface, Lahore, Pakistan
Correspondence: bilalumar@lmi.education

How to Cite: Bilal Umar. (2025). Clinical Researchers vs. Research Clinicians: Impact on Healthcare Research in Pakistan. Journal of Health and Rehabilitation Research, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.61919/jhrr.v5i2.1769>

A clear differentiation between clinical researchers and research clinicians is essential for improving patient care and ensuring that research findings translate effectively into practice (1). Both roles contribute uniquely to evidence-based healthcare, yet their overlap and underdevelopment in Pakistan hinder progress (2).

Clinical researchers focus on study design, data analysis, and regulatory adherence to establish new medical knowledge (3). However, their work often remains disconnected from real-world clinical settings due to minimal engagement with patient care (3). On the other hand, research clinicians apply scientific findings in practice, suggesting new interventions based on patient outcome, Table 1 (2). In Pakistan, their role is often informal, with many clinicians lacking research training and relying on anecdotal evidence rather than structured methodologies (3-5).

Despite the natural synergy between these roles, Pakistan faces multiple challenges that limit effective collaboration (6, 7). Resource constraints, underdeveloped research infrastructure, and insufficient training programs leave many clinicians unprepared to engage with research critically (8, 9). Ethical and regulatory barriers further complicate the integration of clinical research into practice, with prolonged approval processes and inconsistent implementation of research protocols (8, 10). Moreover, institutional silos discourage collaboration between academia, healthcare facilities, and industry, slowing the adaptation of evidence-based advancements (4, 5, 11).

To overcome these challenges, Pakistan must prioritize investment in healthcare research, establish specialized training programs, and create structured pathways for clinicians to engage in research (8-10, 12). Stronger government-academic-private sector collaboration is necessary to bridge the gap between scientific discovery and clinical application. Without these measures, research risks remaining an academic exercise rather than a driver of meaningful improvements in patient care (7, 9, 11).

REFERENCES

1. Hay-Smith EJC, Brown M, Anderson L, Treharne GJ. Once a clinician, always a clinician: a systematic review to develop a typology of clinician-researcher dual-role experiences in health research with patient-participants. BMC medical research methodology. 2016;16:1-17.
2. Amuah J, Mutasingwa DR, Amankwah EK. Enhancing Collaboration between Clinician-Researchers and Methodologists in Clinical Research. The Journal of pediatrics. 2020;221:S58-S61.

3. Williams J, Craig TJ, Robson D. Barriers and facilitators of clinician and researcher collaborations: a qualitative study. BMC Health Services Research. 2020;20:1-11.

4. Lottes AE, Cavanaugh KJ, Chan YY-F, Devlin VJ, Goergen CJ, Jean R, et al. Navigating the regulatory pathway for medical devices—a conversation with the FDA, clinicians, researchers, and industry experts. Journal of Cardiovascular Translational Research. 2022;15(5):927-43.

5. Muhammad Q, Eiman H, Fazal F, Ibrahim M, Gondal MF. Healthcare in Pakistan: Navigating Challenges and Building a Brighter Future. Cureus. 2023.

6. AbuOdah H, Said NB, Nair SC, Allsop MJ, Currow DC, Salah MS, et al. Identifying barriers and facilitators of translating research evidence into clinical practice: A systematic review of reviews. Health & Social Care in the Community. 2022;30(6).

7. Almas A, Awan S, Bloomfield G, Nisar MI, Siddiqi S, Ahmed A, et al. Opportunities and challenges to non-communicable disease (NCD) research and training in Pakistan: a qualitative study from Pakistan. BMJ Open. 2022;12(12):e066460.

8. Bonfim D, Belotti L, de Almeida LY, Eshriqui I, Velasco SRM, Monteiro CN, et al. Challenges and strategies for conducting research in primary health care practice: an integrative review. BMC Health Services Research. 2023;23(1).

9. Hassan M, Butt ZA. Cancer research in Pakistan: Opportunities, challenges and the way forward. Journal of Cancer Policy. 2022;34:100358.

10. Mumtaz H, Haider SMA, Neha F, Saqib M, Nadeem A, Fahim A, et al. Clinical trials landscape in a lower-middle-income country (Pakistan). Journal of Clinical and Translational Science. 2024;8(1).

11. Sherin A. Clinical research in pakistan: past, present and future prospects. Khyber Medical University Journal. 2023;15(1):1-3.

12. Laraib U, Muhammad Hashim K, Yasar A. Transforming Healthcare with Artificial Intelligence in Pakistan: A Comprehensive Overview. Pakistan Armed Forces Medical Journal. 2023;73(4):955-63.

Disclaimer: The views and data in articles are solely those of the authors. The journal disclaims liability for any use of the published content