Research as a fundamental tool in clinical decision-making in a pediatric hospital of the public health network

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The Hospital María, Pediatrics Specialties (HMEP), is a national reference center for highly complex pathologies in pediatric patients in Honduras. It has 11 pediatric subspecialties, clinical management support units and a Teaching and Research Unit (TRU). As part of the network of public hospitals of the Secretary of Health, it receives students from the careers of the health area at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, both from public and private universities. The TRU is responsible for the organization and monitoring of the academic and research activities of the students, as well as support in the development of evidence-based clinical care guidelines and the development of research that allows adequate decision-making on the management of pathologies within the hospital and that generate recommendations to strengthen the first level of care with the aim of improving the management of pediatric patients. One of the recent experiences was about a research study carried out with patients of the neurology outpatient clinic, in which a characterization of patients with epilepsy was carried out with the participation of medical students, pediatricians, neurologists and epidemiologists of the hospital. The study generated evidence to improve care in the neurology service and was a source of hypotheses and new research questions to propose a case-control research study on drug-resistant epilepsy. This example and some others have taught us the usefulness of conducting research for health decision-making, the generation of public policies at the national level with a view to joining efforts to reduce existing poverty and inequality, creating a favorable environment for the social and economic development of the country and specifically to reduce morbidity and mortality in children. We know that in Honduras, as in the rest of the developing countries, the pending agenda in terms of research is wide; the existing gaps are many and the main challenge to face is the lack of financing, as well as the consolidation of clear lines of research, international exchanges with research units and groups with extensive experience in clinical research, equipping the unit with statistical programs for data analysis and training in new research methodologies.