Increasing the research capacity of the postgraduate program Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation: 12-year experience.

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In the clinical postgraduate programs of the Faculty of Medical Sciences at the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) there is limited scientific production due to the non-systematization of the research process and the little time dedicated to it. The Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Postgraduate Program (PMFR) was created in 2005. It is a three-year program and as part of the graduation requirements it includes a research module and the completion of a research project. In 2010, a synergy was established between the Scientific Research Unit (UIC) and the PMFR with the purpose of increasing and improving the research quality and relevance. In the beginning, the collaboration consisted of providing specific advice to the residents’ research projects. Later, the research methodology and ethics courses were implemented in person and virtually (https://globalhealthtrainingcentre.tghn.org). In 2012, UIC supported the process of identifying research priorities and weighing the identified research themes, allowing research to be carried out that responds to prioritized health problems. From the beginning to the present, 20 research projects have been carried out in clinical and epidemiological areas. In 2014, national studies began and were developed jointly between residents and last year medical students, measuring disability in different populations: economically active, elderly and children, applying internationally standardized instruments. In 2015, following the guidelines of the Science and Technology Research System (SICyT)-UNAH, a research group was formed named Function, Disability and Health, composed of thematic advisors (rehabilitators) and methodological advisors (health workers, epidemiologists) including UNAH faculty and physiatrists of the Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS), University Hospital and residents, carrying out training activities, engaging the community and performing research that have contributed to the generation of knowledge and guidelines.

Working in a systematic and organized way has allowed the development of capacities in both teaching staff and postgraduate residents, and the health research ecosystem has been strengthened by increasing the number and quality of research. It is necessary to move forward in order to take research findings into policy and practice by connecting health research with public health.