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'Linking research to action' in Iran: Two decades after integration of the Health Ministry and the medical universities

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Summary

Objective

To examine the impact of integration of the Iranian Health Ministry and medical universities, which took place in 1985, on 'linking research to action'.

Study design

A qualitative study including 18 in-depth interviews and 10 focus group discussions with different stakeholders ranging from researchers, policy makers and service providers in medical and non-medical groups.

Methods

A thematic framework was used to identify various positive and negative aspects of the integration on 'linking research to action' to date.

Results

The positive influences on universities that have been established since integration and/or in the peripheral provinces are more prominent. Distribution of health manpower in various parts of the country has almost unanimously been stated as a positive aftermath. On the other hand, the negative influence most agreed

upon was the deviation of larger universities from their main commitment of knowledge production, due to overindulgence in service delivery.

Conclusions

Before making any decisions about changing the current structure of the health-research system, the country's national innovation system should be defined. This is because national research problems are not confined to integration and health research, and cover more general aspects. Therefore, any change in integration and health research should be considered secondary to the latter.

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Keywords

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