

# Getting started with medical research? What future doctors must know

OCT 18, 2022

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For medical students and residents, conducting research offers an opportunity to make a major impact. Getting started, however, can be one of the more daunting aspects of pursuing a research project.

For students interested in the research conducted by their peers, the AMA Research Challenge poster symposium and semifinals take place virtually Oct. 20–22. The event, which is free to attend, offers the opportunity to explore research in a variety of topics and specialties, provide advice and feedback. AMA members can also score posters to help decide the five finalists competing for a \$10,000 grand prize that will be determined in December.

Three physicians with extensive research experience offered key points on how to get started as a physician researcher.

## Growing pains are natural

Clyde Yancy, MD, MSc, is vice dean of diversity and inclusion at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Having done research and judged past AMA Research Challenge events, he said that, inevitably, junior researchers will make missteps. Learning from them is part of the process.

“This is the time in your maturation as an investigator when you want to fail and fail often,” said Dr. Yancy, an AMA member. “And that seems counterintuitive, but you really want to know how do you regroup? How do you rebound? How do you recalibrate? How do you refocus? How do you learn from past experiences? You can rejoice your wins but you learn from your losses.”

## Guidance is invaluable

Sanjay Desai, MD, is the AMA's chief academic officer and group vice president of medical education. He will judge the AMA Research Challenge finals, which take place in December.

"It's probably intimidating for some that haven't spent as much time before medical school to pursue" research, Dr. Desai said. "But I would say: Everyone, this is your opportunity to learn more about it and to really get meaningful experiences. And the most important thing is to seek out mentors. Medical schools have no shortage of research mentors that you could talk with and learn from and hopefully engage with in a way that would advance research and science."

## Let passions drive you

Ricardo Correa, MD, is an AMA member and an advisory member for the AMA Research Challenge. Having conducted research for a good chunk of his career, Dr. Correa has found that following your passions tends to yield results.

"Do not let anyone destroy that passion, destroy that goal in your career. There will not be a straight line to achieve research in academia, there will be some curves but the goal at the end is the same. The goal is that you want to become a physician-scientist, that you want to produce research, that you want to change the world," Dr. Correa said. "So, continue with your dream ... then find persons who can guide you."