



Research Collaborations: In Pursuit of Progressive Science

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Editorial

Owing to its several beneficial contributions to the society, role of scientific research cannot be belittled and yet the responsibility is huge for the present and the future scientists to focus upon right goals and determination to achieve them. As its rightly stated in a report from National Institute of Aging which aimed to identify the factors that contribute to the likelihood of discoveries that, "The idea is that scientific advances are most likely to arise, or are most easily promoted, when scientists from different disciplines are brought together and encouraged to free themselves from disciplinary constraints" [1-5]. This suggests teamwork or collaborative research is one of the key elements towards scientific progress and development.

There are huge benefits in collaborations which arise from exchange of ideas providing new perspective to existing problem, the expansion of the skill sets, motivation and generation of faster results. These are also important in present scenario of limiting grants, researchers having common objectives should be able to co-ordinate economically and professionally to achieve them. Importantly, the collaborations can only be productive if the participating teams follow some set guidelines and some of these are discussed below which might prove helpful for better and fruitful collaborations:

The clarity of goals and effective communication between the collaborating project investigators and their team researchers is crucial. Biweekly or monthly meetings help to keep the momentum and interest in the project.

The experimental strategies and the role of each participating researcher should be discussed at the onset of the collaboration.

Insecurities run high in science, especially in today's competitive environments. Authorship is a major concern which leads to discontentment among the parties and therefore, if possible, it is wise to make the order of the authors clear from the beginning.

Time is the currency and the teams should co-ordinate to meet deadlines.

As true in any relationship, the disagreements in collaboration are inevitable. In spite of abiding by the rules, there could be conflicts and some of the challenges in collaborative research are discussed below:

Generally, it's one lab for which collaborative project is their baby whereas it might not be the case with the collaborating lab which can lose enthusiasm with passing time. The collaborations hit a rough patch when the expectations are unmet which is not rare in research. Also, time can play a major role, the understanding of the type of experiments and time needed for these to be completed is important. For example, for a bio informatician who collaborated with an immunologist, to validate his predictions, may find it hard to wait for results whereas the later may face several hiccups before producing any convincing outcomes. A few colleagues have also mentioned suffering in collaborations with big names as these tend to be more authoritative and at times leads to submissive behavior of the junior scientists which rather than helping them hampers their progress as independent scientists. Therefore, it's better to test the waters before jumping into collaboration in excitement. Most of the issues can be resolved with discreet judgment, better communication and perseverance to make it work for something more meaningful.

Altogether, healthy collaborations are great opportunities in addressing and providing holistic answers to complex problems and likely a better utilization of resources for a common goal.

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