

STARTING WEB BASED MEDICAL RESEARCH DATABASE

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Medical databases serve a critical function in healthcare, including the areas of patient care, administration, research and education. Healthcare databases are most frequently developed for the purpose of assessing the quality of healthcare, often for a specific disease or within a specific healthcare delivery system.¹ Data base can be simple hand written charts or excel sheets or it can web based data bases with more benefits and applications.

At the university of Vanderbilt a secure web application for building and managing online surveys and databases was built and it is called REDCap as an abbreviation of (Research Data Capture). While REDCap can be used to collect virtually any type of data, it is specifically geared to support online or offline data capture for research studies and operations. The REDCap Consortium, a vast support

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network of collaborators, is composed of thousands of active institutional partners in over one hundred countries who utilize and support REDCap in various ways. Now up to 3175 institute, 128 country and 612000 project are in red cap.²

How to get REDCap at our local institution?

REDCap software and support are available at no charge to institutions that join the REDCap Consortium. Software, support, and documentation are provided via the internal Consortium portal (accessible only by partners). The consortium is active, and we typically hold a virtual all-hands meeting each Friday to discuss new development, prioritization, outstanding support issues, etc. Attendance is not required, but we have found this to be an effective way to learn about upcoming software features, hear consortium announcements, and solicit new ideas and feedback. Volunteers have

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THE DREAM OF ACCREDITATION IN IRAQI MEDICAL COLLEGES

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The Iraqi medical education system graduates about 3000 physicians per a year who are distributed among different Iraqi health organizations. Physicians are the leaders of the health system; therefore, the quality of these physicians, has a broad national impact on the health system and the provided services.

Accreditation is the certification for the medical colleges in the delivery of medical education. It ensures template for healthcare professional standards that can provide better health services and guarantee patient safety. The ultimate goal is upgrading the health sys-

tem in the country.

Most of medical colleges in Iraq have traditional, teacher centre and hospital based training with only a few exception. The traditional curriculum is based on a six year, old British, curriculum. All medical college should update their curriculum to adhere to the accreditation standards. New curriculum design should emphasize on community health problems in social and clinical context, including a greater focus on primary health care. Building professional competencies in health practice with a better vertical integration of basic and clinical sciences

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contributed ideas for new modules, documentation, business models for supporting institutional projects, module testing resources, and technical support for new members.

REDCap is not difficult to support; one support person can manage hundreds of projects, but there are requirements for infrastructure (PHP web server, MySQL database server, etc.)

Interested institutions will need a technical person (or team) for installing and maintaining the software, as well as an administrative person (or team) who will provide day-to-day assistance to your REDCap end-users. The technical staff will need to be affiliated with your institution, not a third-party software vendor or service provider.

Although REDCap is available at no charge, it is not open-source software. Before an institu-

tion can join the consortium (and then obtain the REDCap source code), a valid end-user license agreement between Vanderbilt University and your institution must be executed. Since institutional policies vary, acknowledgment or direct consent of the Director of Technology Transfer or General Counsel may be necessary.³

I think starting this collaboration on a small scale in one of our medical institutions in Ministry of Health is an important 1st step in cultivating research culture in an international standard.

References:

1. The essential nature of healthcare databases in critical care medicine. *Crit Care*. 2008;12(5):176.
2. Harris PA, Taylor R, Thielke R, Payne J, Gonzalez N, Conde JG. Research electronic data capture (REDCap)- A metadata-driven methodology and workflow process for providing translational research informatics support. *Journal of Biomedical Informatics*. 2009;42(2):377-381. doi:10.1016/j.jbi.2008.08.010
3. <https://www.project-redcap.org/>



ACCREDITATION

through problem-based organ system.

Reform of curriculum is not the only crucial challenge confront undergraduate medical education in Iraq, many others are also important like selection of the medical students, development of the faculty, and standardising the teaching setting in hospitals and primary health care centres. These issues are essential steps towards accreditation project for all medical colleges.

On other hand, the accreditation dream is conflicted by the old rules and regulation gov-

erned the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education. This conflict makes reforming medical education in Iraq a complex and challenging.

At present, the shape and structure of the future of Iraqi medical education is ambiguous. However, aliment of efforts of the politicians, decision makers, and stakeholders with the availability of financial support and proper strategic planning will ensure that the dream of accreditation of medical colleges in Iraq becomes true.