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Are industry and academia willing to team up?

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The Editor's Desk

Are industry and academia willing to team up?

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Edwards¹ has argued in favour of academia teaming up with industry or vice versa, to advance science and more importantly, to ensure that the results obtained in the academic research labs are reproducible by other researchers. Though this may seem like an ideal scenario where industry should be more forthcoming to team up with academia, it does not happen often for various reasons. Industry Institute Partnerships are more of an exception rather than a rule in many developing countries. Both academia and industry are equally responsible for this nonchalant attitude. Academicians in many developing countries have encircled them in their comfort zones of teaching rather than stepping out of this comfort zone to take up more challenges and involve themselves in research too. On one hand Industry, on their part, have been finding it difficult to collaborate due to one of the legitimate reasons of research results originating in academic labs being non-reproducible, whereas on the other hand, academia believes that industry will profitably exploit their research without sharing proportionate financial benefits with the researchers. So, there is an amount of mistrust between academia and industry. Furthermore, academic research also need to look at commercial viability of their research activities as industry sees academic research as more of a repetitive activity without any commercial application. This gap of differing goals and perceptions need to be bridged. In addition, academic institutions should have a clear framework and policy supporting their faculty members to undertake commercially

viable research and rewarding or incentivising those faculty members, who indulge in research having commercial potential. Governments, on their part, should also bring in policy documents, after discussion with all stakeholders, regarding a viable and sustainable mechanism, which would bring academia and industry closer to collaborate for research, technology transfer and commercialization.

Reference

1. Edwards A – Team up with Industry. Nature 2016; 531:299-301.

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