quantity of research. Countries like the US and UK have been doing this anyway to further their research output. It is high time that Indian researchers/policy makers encourage such an interdisciplinary collaboration within India, rather than going for international collaboration.

A. ROSALIND MARITA

Sir Hurkisondas Nurrotumdas,
Medical Research Society,
Sir H. N. Hospital & Research Centre,
Raja Rammohan Roy Road,
Mumbai 400 004, India
e-mail: gkannu@vsnl.net

Response:

As far as we know, we have captured close to 100% of papers pertaining to diabetes written from Indian laboratories and indexed in anyone of the three databases. I wish the author had indicated what other keywords she would want us to have included. In fact she could try using other keywords along with the ones we have used and see if she could obtain a few more relevant papers by searching the same three databases.

Her point that because of the clinical bias of our search strategy we have been able to retrieve a higher share (of the world's publications) using *BBCI*, is not acceptable. Actually a higher share in *BBCI* than in *PubMed* indicates that we have captured the basic research papers well. *BBCI* has a higher basic research orientation than clinical orientation. *PubMed* covers a larger number of medical and clinical journals.

We have not said or indicated that international collaboration is an indicator of successful research outcome. We gave data on international collaboration to make our mapping exercise complete. Also, we were unable to look at international collaboration in papers indexed only in *PubMed* (as this database only lists the address of the first author).

China has international collaboration in 45% of papers in tuberculosis. In diabetes, the figures are 16% for India and 30% for China. In diabetes research, considering the 56 papers from China with international coauthors, the Chinese are first authors in 20 papers; this works out to 35%. Indians are first authors in 27 of the 86 internationally coauthored papers; this works out to 31%. There is not much of a difference between India and China, especially if we consider the rather small number of papers from China.

SUBBIAH ARUNACHALAM

M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation
Third Cross Street,
Taramani Institutional Area,
Chennai 600 113, India
e-mail: arun@mssrf.res.in

NEWS

Regional Engineering Colleges go national

Major and welcome changes have come into effect in the area of engineering education in the country. Whereas the brand image status of the Indian Institutes of Technology remains untouched, there is to be a restructuring of the Regional Engineering Colleges (RECs). Out of the seventeen RECs, ten are to be converted into National Institutes of Technology (NITs); those at Allahabad, Bhopal, Calicut, Hamirpur, Jaipur, Kurukshetra, Nagpur, Rourkela, Silchar and Surathkal. Eventually, all of the RECs would be converted into NITs. The newly formed institutes are to be governed by a professional board whose members would be eminent persons from the fields of academics, industry and technology as is being done in the case of the IITs, according to Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister for Human Resource Development, Science and Technology and Ocean Development, while announcing the restructuring. These NITs would be granted a 'Deemed to be University' status and would be administered from a national perspective rather than a region-specific focus.

Keeping in mind the need for quality technical education, the restructured RECs would be able to increase their intake of aspirants for engineering courses, creating a much larger pool of well-trained engineering graduates.

The NITs would be financed in full by the Central Government, with the admission quota remaining the same as at present, i.e. 50% seats reserved for State-based students and the rest selected on an all-India basis. The NITs would closely interact with the IITs and industries to augment joint research activities, curriculum design, and develop specialized programmes in emerging areas at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Placid Rodriguez, Recruitment and Assessment Centre, Defence Research and Development Organization, New Delhi welcomed the move to restructure the RECs which he felt would further raise the quality of engineering graduates in the country. About 8000 students are currently trained in the RECs every year out of the 400,000 engineering graduates. He however said that while restructuring RECs to NITs, due attention should be paid to ensuring the formation of sound basic sciences departments in the NITs. This would give a well-rounded science-cum-engineering education to graduating students, especially in emerging fields. This change, according to Rodriguez, if introduced, would be in keeping with the pull of the market place and its requirements, and would help move away from the old-fashioned compartmentalized engineering education.

Nirupa Sen