



SEMINAR ON THE PLACE OF PSYCHIATRY
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PSYCHIATRY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DEPARTMENTAL
ORGANIZATION AND THE STAFF SITUATION IN TWENTY
MEDICAL SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
REGION

by

Helio L. de Oliveira
Regional Adviser on Medical Education

This is an elaboration on some information available on twenty Schools of Medicine from eleven countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

All countries having medical schools are represented in this sample. It includes old and new institutions, with dates of foundation ranging from 1860 to 1967.

The average number of students per class, calculated on the basis of first, second and third year classes in the academic year 1969/70, varies from eighteen to 646, with an overall mean value of 153.

The average teaching staff for both basic and clinical departments are 100 teachers per school. This figure includes full-time and part-time teachers of all categories from professor to demonstrator. Five schools have less than 50 teachers; nine have from 51 to 100, five from 101 to 200, and one more than 200 teachers.

Applying to all schools a scheme of six large departments, the following would be the breakdown of the average teaching staff:

Morphology	11.1
Physiology	17.1
Pathology	14.2
Preventive Medicine	4.2
Medicine	24.3
Surgery	29.1

Each of those Departments includes several units in real existence. For instance, "Medicine" as considered above embodies medicine, paediatrics, dermatology, neurology, psychiatry and radiology; under "Physiology" are understood physiology, biochemistry and pharmacology. It is considered that each of such big Departments teaches at least two classes every year; in the "average school" this corresponds to the task of teaching about 300 students, making the following teacher/student ratios:

Morphology	1/27
Physiology	1/17
Pathology	1/21
Preventive Medicine	1/71
Medicine	1/12
Surgery	1/10

The First Conference on Medical Education in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (Teheran, 1962) recommends that each department should have at least one teacher for 10 students, provided that the staff are full-time.

Behind the above average ratios there is a wide variation from school to school. As only one example, for each teacher in "physiology" there are the following number of students in each of the schools under consideration: 5, 6, 7, 7, 8, 9, 14, 14, 15, 15, 15, 15, 18, 25, 27, 30, 31, 34, 38 and 46.

"Psychiatry" and "Neuro-Psychiatry" are among twenty-nine different denominations that came out of the available information as applied to individual teaching units in the twenty schools.

"Psychiatry" appears four times as an independent unit, with the following teaching staff respectively: one assistant professor only; one visiting professor only; one assistant professor only; and a staff of six teachers. Three times it is shown as "neuro-psychiatry", staffed respectively by one assistant professor only, by five teachers, and by seven teachers. In one instance, a member of the department of Medicine is indicated as assistant professor of psychiatry; not always specification as such is given, so that in other schools teaching of mental diseases may also be a part of the general teaching of medicine.

In no instance is Psychology or Medical Psychology to be found as a teaching unit among the basic sciences or the clinical disciplines.

The above picture came out of information which did not specifically intend to explore the position of psychiatry in the medical curriculum in the Region. On the other hand, the information concerns only half of the medical schools of the Region. However, the picture is clear enough to show that there is a general shortage of medical teaching staff, and that behavioural sciences, medical psychology and psychiatry are not outstanding features of the medical education as it stands at present in this Region.