

SEMINAR ON THE PROVISION OF HEALTH  
SERVICES FOR THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

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5.3 THE HEALTH TEAM IN THE PROVISION OF  
HEALTH CARE TO THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

5.3.2 AUXILIARY PERSONNEL

MEDICAL ASSISTANT

by

Dr Fathi M. El-Hakim\*

I A Medical Assistant as defined by WHO is a health worker whose duty includes the diagnosis of and the prescription of a standard treatment for the common diseases and who is therefore auxiliary to the fully qualified doctor.

The Medical Assistant must be under some form of supervision normally by a fully qualified doctor but exceptionally by senior and experienced members of the same category like the provincial medical assistants.

II Historical Development

Training of Medical Assistants in the Sudan started 55 years ago because of the extreme shortage of doctors and immensity of the country, and its small scattered settlements at that time. Creation of Medical Assistant is an economy in the expensive manpower. The same reasons have remained just as valid up to now, and probably for the next fifty coming years. The Medical Assistants are really the back bone of the Sudan Medical Services.

Through Medical Assistants we will be able to expand our medical services to such an extent that they would cover every village, whether sedentary, nomadic or lying amidst forests.

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\* Head, Child Health Department, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Khartoum, Sudan

### III Selection of Medical Assistant Student to the School

The criteria the student should fulfil for enrollment into the school are the following:

1. Candidate must be a certified nurse.
2. Should have practised for three years after getting his nursing certificate.
3. Age limit: 21-35 years
4. Educational level; at least 9 years of basic education.
5. Medically fit.
6. Undergoes a competitive entrance examination.
7. Some other pre-entrance attributes.
8. There is an imposition of a probationary period of three months.

### IV Length of Training Course

It is of two years. It is high time that it should be extended to 3 years so that the special subject e.g. paediatrics, that had been added to the curriculum may be studied properly.

### V Syllabus

The curriculum consists of 2032 hours - 640 hours for theoretical and 1392 hours for practical.

#### a) Anatomy and physiology

Anatomy consists of 68 lectures in 60 hours, and physiology 48 lectures in 144 hours.

#### b) Medicine

144 lectures in 432 hours and 624 hours work in dispensaries and health centres, and 144 hours clinical work in wards.

#### c) Surgery

80 lectures in 120 hours and 144 hours clinical.

#### d) 30 lectures in 375 hours and 312 hours for practical.

#### e) Obstetrics and gynaecology

15 lectures in 22 hours and 20 hours practical.

The role of the Medical Assistant in the Provision of Health Care to the pre-school child is a limited one. The child in the Sudan is considered very much a personal possession of the mother and approaching the mother is very much facilitated by the health visitor, being of the same sex. Still, with better orientation of our Medical Assistants in preventive paediatrics and equipping their dispensaries properly they can play a role in providing services to the pre-school child.