

The Changing Face of Medical Education: Are We Ready?

Sir,

I have read the editorial by Prof. Memon, (December 2013).¹ I respect his views, however, I could not understand few things.

Editorials of scientific journals, magazines and newspapers are taken as an official policies of the journals/papers and institution itself.

The editorial which I am talking about has highlighted multiple problems, shows contradictions and ambiguities. I humbly request that these may be clarified.

The editorial starts with the problems of female doctors outnumbering male doctors. I know it is a worldwide phenomenon but is it a problem? Does CPSP (JCPSP being the official spokesman of CPSP) oppose the induction of female candidates in Medical Colleges and revert back to female quota system of pre 1972 era? I think the readers of JCPSP deserve a clear answer to this.

The next problem highlighted in the editorial is of the brain drain. On the one hand, the editor is complaining of brain drain and in the same editorial he is taking credit that the CPSP has improved the standards of postgraduate training to the extent that our specialists are being demanded overseas. Which part of the editorial should be taken as policy of CPSP? An opposition to brain drain (and, therefore, the government and concerned authorities should enact legislation to stop doctors to go abroad for jobs) or we should celebrate our success of producing efficient post-graduate who are welcomed abroad with open arms?

I agree that overemphasis on publish or perish is not in the best interest of profession particularly in our setup.

As regards EBM (Evidence Based Medicine) and other systems, I have witnessed many experiments but we are still at the same place and plane as far as our undergraduate medical education is concerned.

In evaluation, it started with full essay type questions, then changed to many different types of multiple combined with SEQ and long essay. Community based medical education, Community Oriented Medical Education (COME) and other experiments are giving way to EBM.

I request the professionals to sit down and evolve a system which is best for our country.

REFERENCES

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Author's Reply:

It is heartening to know that colleagues are taking a keen interest in the CPSP publication and in general the medical education in the country. In general, the editorial has tried to bring forth the changes in medical education in the last decade and the author has not tried to compile a list of problems that Pakistan is currently encountering.

1. Although it would be suitable for the editors to reply to the notion that editorials reflect the journal's policy, the author may briefly suggest that editorials by definition bring in light recent changes in a particular area and are merely opinion of the authors. The editors have no responsibility to modify or change the view or ask that opinion pieces to have a middle-of-the-road view.¹

2. The author has merely pointed out to a change in population dynamics which has affected the medical profession as well as other professions throughout the world and the author in no way has implied that this is a problem or a negative. The author considers this change a positive development and is of the opinion that this is a necessary development and will help Pakistan to develop and help us to serve our population.

3. It is important to note that the author has suggested that medical workforce has globalised which makes it easier for the doctors to mobilise. The fact that CPSP has international recognition is a separate comment and focuses on building-up postgraduate education in Pakistan. The author has refrained from intertwining the two entirely different concepts. Both of these phenomena are separate and occur simultaneously.

4. The author has not commented on the successes and failures of COME or EBM curricula and different assessment techniques. The author agrees that more needs to be done in these areas particularly in undergraduate education.

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Editor's Note: Editorials do not reflect CPSP/JCPSP policies. It is the opinion based write-up of the writer.

