

# MEDICAL EDUCATION

## Invitation of Viewpoints on the Innovative Approach to Medical Education

By Akbar, Mohsin Mohammed\*  
Najeeb S. Jamsheer\*\*

### PART II. SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Medical education, being either conventional or innovative, must have an end-programme product that fulfils the laid down criteria and which is congruous with the accepted educational philosophies. A well rounded general doctor who has acquired a "good" fund of knowledge backed by reasonable skills, and who is able to persue his own education without being constantly graded or reminded, is an acceptable end-programme product of any medical school. To achieve this there are minimal basic requirements : the suitable learning process that has the right staff and the right material directed at the learner — the student. The latter is going to be the focus of our attention in this article.

To ensure that the objectives of the innovative approach to education are fulfilled, one has to pay tremendous attention to the characteristics of the student at the time of enrollment. There need to be well defined criteria to guide the faculty when they select the appropriate candidate.

The candidate who is interviewed to be enrolled should not step into it blind-folded but should have a fair idea about the philosophies of the educational system and the requirements. In plain words the candidate should choose the System and not be coerced into it. This entails introducing the System to the students while they are still in high schools, and may be through an introductory workshop focussing on the philosophy and the approach. The panel of judges, in the process of selection, should be cognisant of the criteria and look for the relevant qualities in the students. We believe these should address maturity, perseverance, tolerance, team approach to problem solving, self education, the inquisitive critical mind, high sense of responsibility, compassion; and sensitivity to the problems of the community, the sensitivity that transcends the mere medical issues to encompass the total health of the community. Insensitivity to one's community problems will produce callous human beings and will restrict the graduate from playing an effective role as a medical practitioner.

The panel that selects students ought to consider in the criteria, the outstanding performance in the high school years but not necessarily based on just grades. Selection of students based on grades alone is apt to include "book worms" who do not possess the other qualities which are probably more relevant. High grades represent an achievement which is only one of the many requirements necessary for

---

\*Chairman, Paediatric Dept  
Salmaniya Medical Centre  
State of Bahrain

\*\*Chairman, Radiology Dept  
Salmaniya Medical Centre  
State of Bahrain



meeting the end-programme objectives of this medical education approach. One should emphasise however, at this point, that the relevance of high school grades, in the selection of the candidates, can only be tested retrospectively through the evaluation of the graduates. One of the characteristics of the System is to discourage the student from being grade conscious. Once in this educational system the students are assessed "outside" the "grading obsession" and thus discouraged from becoming "GRADOPHILIC". To deviate from this in the process of student selection is tantamount to violating one of the basic principles on which this System is built.

A criticism of the System is its de-emphasis on competitiveness, the students either pass or fail, this discourages the achievers and impedes excellence. This is not the case. Anyone with even the minimum contact with the students within the System must have witnessed the enthusiasm and the hard work each student goes through to come up with a solution to a problem or workup a research project, with the final work showing the individual mark of each participant, thus even individuality is not lost.

Once again we solicit contributions to this series of articles on medical education, please give us your opinions and comments.