

Educating Medical Students: Strategies and New Methods

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In educating medical students, it is paramount that the educators succeed in imparting knowledge, attitude, and skills required for the practice of medicine. Due to the importance of this task, there is constant innovation in the field of medical education. Successful acquisition of required skills is dependent upon the appropriate learning environment as well as the presence of motivated and knowledgeable teachers (1, 2).

Teaching and learning methods are an important topic in medical education. Currently, the chief method of education in medical settings is lecturing. This method, which is prevalent across many levels of the education system, is appropriate for imparting much information from educator to student. However, lecturing does not lead to semantic deep learning and is inadequate for teaching medical students (3). To improve students' capabilities, it is important to use newer methods; so that the learners acquire the appropriate essential skills and receive feedback on their performance before encountering any patients; so that they are less likely to harm patients. After reviewing their syllabi, many medical universities, including the Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran, have opted to adopt student-oriented teaching methods. One such method is Team-Based Learning (TBL) (2).

Team-based learning leads to deeper learning, easier acquisition of content by students, and more student engagement in classes. Due to short lengths of patients stay, sub-specialization of hospitals beds, and increasing societal attention to patient care, hospitalized patients in most circumstances do not provide required opportunities for teaching clinical skills. Furthermore, due to the importance of learning on patient health as well as higher attention on patient rights, current focus is on teaching clinical and communication skills through virtual spaces. Medical education has undergone significant changes in past two decades, leaning towards Clinical Skills Centers for teaching clinical, diagnostic, and communication skills (4).

In these centers, various teaching methods such as lecturing, small group discussions, virtual reality technologies, using scientific instruments, role playing,

role modeling, simulated patients, manikins, and multimedia moulages are used to teach scientific, communicative, and mental skills (1). On the other hand, clinical education is an important pillar of any medical course; crucial because education is presented in a professional real-life setting and the learners will be more enthusiastic as a result of their active participation. Professors will be models of appropriate thinking, behavior, and professional attitude. This is the environment in which skills such as history taking, physical examinations, clinical reasoning, decision making, empathy, and professional responsibility are learned in a unified and integrated manner (5).

In conclusion, a successful educational organization must have a flexible, but organized, program in line with the university's educational goals. Having the appropriate organization and planning is crucial in training physicians that can diagnose and treat disease as well as work towards preventing it in the society.

Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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