

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

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Academic growth and vitality is dependant on the expertise and training of faculty members and staff development has a critical role to play in maintaining academic standards and promoting excellence.

The need for faculty development is an important component of the response of the medical profession to a variety of challenges to medical education and healthcare. As a result of a move to a more open society with access to media and information patients are becoming aware of choices in treatment and no longer wish to be passive recipients of medical opinion but want to share in decision making and expect appropriate communication and attitudes, there is a demand to be treated with the most advanced methods of health care and patients are less tolerant of deficiencies in healthcare delivery.

Society also expects accountability and it is increasingly expected that medicine should be evidence based.

New Challenges in Healthcare

The new challenges in health care have resulted in changes in under and postgraduate training and healthcare delivery. Funding and regulatory bodies as well as students and patients now expect value for money and the ability to work as a member of a team have become important issues a multi-professional approach to healthcare is required. The traditional medical course with progression from basic sciences to clinical sciences without integration has given way to new curriculum designs with an appropriate selection of basic core content and integration of basic and clinical sciences the exponential growth of medical knowledge has greatly increased the content of the curriculum and problem based learning has become an important learning strategy.

The pressures to deliver a clinical service, carry out research provide training to various levels has made it more difficult for senior staff to focus on

teaching and at the same time trainees and doctors are engaged in faster training programs with fewer opportunities to take part in training activities however student expectations of both quality and delivery of teaching are higher and review and monitoring are becoming essential activities in medical colleges and universities.

The response to these challenges has been the development on new curricula which focus on adult learning styles, a variety of strategies for adult learning have been adopted in place of the traditional teacher centered methods such as problem based learning(PBL), integrated learning, task based and outcome based curricula.

Communication skills, attitudinal and ethical issues, teamwork and evidence based practice are part of these new curricula.

New learning strategies with focus on small group teaching, clinical skills centres (Skill labs) the use of computer assisted learning programs, internet, videos and self videoing have been adopted. These integrated curricula and new approaches have led to a change in the approach to assessment new methods to test performance and competence in diverse settings are being introduced. The OSCE has found a place in various examinations and Extended matching items(EMIs) are replacing shorter multiple choice questions. The concept of formative assessment has become a part of assessment with portfolio assessment and work based assessment being introduced to assess student performance.

Role of Faculty Development

An amateur role for a medical teacher is no longer acceptable competence in teaching is a requirement for all medical teachers and professionalism and scholarship in medical education are expected little can be accomplished without appropriate staff development Opportunities.

Staff development has to be a planned program to prepare institutions and faculty members for their various roles and to improve an individuals knowledge and skills in the areas of teaching, research and administration. Faculty members need skills relevant to their position in the institution.

The faculty development programs need to focus on teaching improvement with the aim to improve skills in clinical teaching, small group facilitation, lecturing, feedback and evaluation, curriculum and program design.

Various educational formats including workshops, seminars, short courses, are used and integrated longitudinal programs have been developed to allow professionals to maintain their clinical and administrative duties while furthering their own professional development.

Faculty development programs can not designed

or delivered without institutional support and provision of resources for program planning, the institutions need to define goals and priorities and balance individual and organizational needs and also motivate faculty to participate in staff development initiatives, this should help to promote a change that reflects renewed interest in teaching and learning and overcoming limited human and financial resources if we have to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

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