

Book Review

Title of the book: **Essentials of medical education**

Author: **RK Adhikari and PT Jayawickramarajah**

Medical education, curricular strategies and student learning are topics of intense debate these days. Recently, a number of medical colleges have been opened these days in Nepal. Students from Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, other SAARC nations and from other countries are coming to these colleges for medical education.

This book produced by the Health Learning Materials Centre in Kathmandu provides a good introduction to the fascinating subject of medical education. The book has contributors from Nepal, India and other countries. The book is divided into six parts.

The first part deals with curricular strategies. The Institute of Medicine (IoM) in Kathmandu was one of the pioneers in Community Oriented Medical Education (COME). COME is still strong at IOM. With the establishment of new medical colleges and the lack of properly trained and oriented faculty COME is not being satisfactorily practiced in many institutions.

Problem-based learning (PBL) employs the principles of adult learning and most medical schools in Nepal have adopted PBL to a varying extent in the curriculum. The chapter by Dr. Jayawickramarajah provides a practical introduction to PBL. PBL as a concept has shown vitality and different modifications of PBL have been adopted in different medical schools.

The second part deals with 'Educational Methods'. Learning in small groups is at the heart of self-directed, problem-based learning. Small group learning requires rethinking by the tutor or facilitator and the student on their respective roles. A basic introduction to small group learning is provided.

Professor Mohan Joshi at IOM was a pioneer in problem-orientated pharmacotherapy teaching in Nepal. Many of the principles enunciated by him are in use at our institution (Manipal College of Medical Sciences). Selection of personal or P-drugs, verifying the suitability of the selected P-drug for a particular patient and writing a prescription are important steps in rational treatment.

The community based learning sessions at IOM have been designed to equip medical students with the skills necessary to succeed as doctors and managers in peripheral health institutions. Many of these principles are being adopted on other institutions. The increasing migration of man power from Nepal and South Asia to the developed west is a matter of concern. 'Making a diagnosis' is an important skill in medicine. The various methods of making a diagnosis have been covered.

The third part is concerned with the 'Use of technology in medical education'. Various learning resources have been succinctly described by Dr. Adhikari, the dean of IOM. Slides and the overhead projector (OHP) have been described. Being an older book, LCD projector has not been covered. The topic on 'Computers in Medical Education' is also dated. The fourth part deals with 'Assessment of students' achievement'. Different types of assessment methods have been covered in detail.

'Research in medical education' is not really strong in South Asia. A number of initiatives are however, underway in this area. The design of various instruments which can be used in medical education studies has been described and will be useful to teachers to plan research studies. Student selection is an important component of medical school. In Nepal, different selection methods are applied to select students of different nationalities especially in private medical schools.

The various challenges in healthcare and medical education in the coming years are briefly highlighted in the 'Epilogue' section. Each section has a brief introduction and each chapter begins with an introduction and ends with a brief conclusion. Each chapter gives a list of references for further reading. The book should be essential reading for teachers in all medical colleges in Nepal.

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