



Quality Assurance in Medical Education

Xia Xiuming*

Department of Pharmacy, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China

DESCRIPTION

Throughout the ages, physicians have been respected by society for their abilities and competence. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every physician to maintain this belief based on professional competence and high ethical standards. The standard of medical education adopted and maintained by educational institutions goes far beyond shaping the medical practitioner of today and tomorrow. Given the extent to which social and economic factors have affected medical education, the time is fast approaching for a fresh look at the quality of medical education. The importance of medical education in providing quality health care has become very important because many stakeholders have realized that without addressing quality in medical education, it is not possible to improve health care delivery.

Defining “quality” is difficult because it is subjective and dynamic. It can have different meanings for different stakeholders. Quality in medical education can be defined relatively as a condition of meeting the required standards as prescribed by external agencies and it meets those standards again and again. Quality assurance is indicated in all these definitions; In the first definition, quality assurance refers to meeting the requirements of public accountability and external standards, while in the second and third definitions, it is considered necessary to improve and maintain the quality of teaching and learning in an organization.

Quality control is a set of processes or procedures intended to ensure that a product or service performed meets certain quality standards or meets the needs of the client or customer. In quality control, the final product is checked to see if it meets the requirements. If we extend this industrial definition to medical education, we must ensure that the students who are admitted to the course meet the standards, that the curriculum is delivered in a planned manner, that the teaching-learning activities are of a specific standard, and that the teachers who assist them. Students are eligible to reach the final stage. In our institutions and universities, the Medical Council of India (MCI) oversees these quality control policies. However, quality assurance is defined as a set of processes or procedures that are intended to meet the specified requirements of a product

or service under development (both before and after the work is completed). It is defined not only by specifications but also as a product suitable for the purpose. Quality assurance is a continuous process that involves measures taken for measurement, judgment and improvement in the process so that the final product conforms to the specifications of quality. This systematic, structured and continuous improvement will help keep the product always relevant to current demands. In educational institutions, the curriculum, teaching and learning methods and evaluation methods must be constantly reviewed and modified to satisfy ourselves and our stakeholders that quality is guaranteed at every stage of a student’s career. Quality assurance is a wide-ranging range of operations that cover both quality management and quality control. It covers all policies, standards, systems and processes in place to maintain and improve the quality of medical education and training. Quality assurance can be maintained through institutional supervision that includes course evaluation, peer evaluation and evaluation. For external quality assurance, the accreditation standards of international agencies such as the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) must be followed.

Regular feedback from students and alumni on the courses offered, constructive and objective peer evaluation and the use of a wide range of evaluation techniques will improve the quality of produced physicians, thereby improving health care delivery to the community. The methods used to evaluate knowledge, skills, and attitudes help to align teaching and learning with assessments, with well-defined learning outcomes that inform students. A reliable and valid estimate adds to the quality assurance system.

In the face of intense competition and globalization in the medical profession, it is imperative that our graduates and postgraduates be prepared to face the challenge of taking up professional positions anywhere in the world. They must demonstrate knowledge, clinical competence and professionalism. Medical academies must establish quality standards and constantly strive to improve them through innovations and systematic monitoring. Motivation to maintain quality can come from external agencies such as regulatory agencies, which come from minimum requirements or internal motivation.

Correspondence to: Xia Xiuming, Department of Pharmacy, Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, China, E-mail: Xiaming@edu.cn

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