

Professional Development of Medical Educators

Dr. Senussi M Hussein,

MB, MSc, FRCP

High quality Medical Education (ME) is a requirement for excellent outcomes and produce high calibre professional doctors and other health care professionals. This will improve service and benefits patients and society in general. Traditionally ME was by apprenticeship with the teacher lecturing, examining, treating or performing procedures/operations on the patient, while the learners were passive observers with no active role. Recently there has been a paradigm shift in ME and the 21st century has seen a revolution in the field with the focus moving from the teacher to the student. Learning has become a lifelong process which starts in the undergraduate education stage, going through postgraduate training, to the final established professional stage and continuing professional development (CPD). Clinicians are increasingly involved in teaching, learning, assessment and supervisory activities of students, trainees and other health professionals. Taking part in formal educational activities, professional development pathways and other activities in ME allows the clinicians to provide high quality medical education and training.

The need for doctors to have training in teaching is widely recognised. There is a growing number of professional associations, ME journals and a record number of doctors acquiring relevant postgraduate certificates, diplomas and masters degrees. Educational institutions such as LIMU need to develop a robust system of training, for medical teachers, to ensure provision of high quality education and training to their students. This will enable such bodies to supply their societies with knowledgeable, skilled and up-to-date professionals. In general, there are high expectations from institutions and service users for ME to be effective and efficient. Medical educators are 'dual professionals'; they are skilled in their own speciality and also expected to be experts in teaching. They should be committed to maintain and develop their skills and expertise in both aspects of their role to ensure the best outcomes for their patients as well as their students. There is a great need for the development of local professional standards to help and support teachers and trainers to maintain and improve teaching standards and learning. Professional standards for medical educators should be a set of rules and guidelines to develop and maintain the teachers' knowledge and skills, set out clear expectations of effective practice in Education and Training, enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development, support initial teacher education and provide reference point that their organisation can use for their staff development.