

Unequal Distribution of Resources to Medical Students of Karachi Medical & Dental College

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Dear Madam,

I am writing to you in order to highlight the situation that the teachers and students of this institution are facing since the last three years. The issue arose in 2012 when an increase in the number of students was announced by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation KMC¹ from 100 to 250 students in MBBS and 50 to 100 students in BDS. The students and teachers have been facing the consequences of this increase equally as it has laid a stress on both the teachers who were hard pressed to find methods of tutoring more than twice the number of students that they used to grade and evaluate; as well as the students who are under undue stress² due to the decreased availability of the existing resources that were originally promised to only 100 students.

Students of a medical college are in constant need of teaching aids; from three-dimensional human body models to identify various regions of the human anatomy properly, to performing clinical examinations and taking patients' history at the hospital. The sudden increase in the number of students has resulted in an unequal division of learning resources for the students. Borrowing models from the anatomy museum is difficult for students to practice their learning especially near exam time as the models are already being used by other students. Similarly, it is difficult for multiple students

to interact with a single patient whilst inquiring about his/her health status. The crowd near a hospital bed makes the patient uneasy and reluctant to disclose personal details and therefore hinders the learning of the students. Thus, a great amount of precious time for student is wasted in waiting for the resources that are imperative to acquire medical education.

For teachers, it is equally difficult to cater to such a large number of students on an individual basis. The problem of interaction with students may not be as prominent during lectures, as they are when it comes to interacting with each student. This problem arises specifically during clinical rotations when the teaching faculty is not only pressed for time but is also multi-tasking and has to ensure each student is working at his or her optimum capacity to grasp the concept of the pathogenesis, clinical diagnosis and treatment of a patient³. The allocation of more than twice the number of students per patient makes it difficult for the doctor who is assisting them to understand the disease or evaluating the students' level of comprehension to do so in a crowded environment. Due to the large student to teacher ratio, students do not get proper time and opportunity to interact with both the teacher as well as the patient, and the instructors often get tired of attending to too many students and ensuring they have fulfilled their course/curriculum requirements for the respective year. Therefore, the students are often left to their own devices and confused regarding the methods and devices to study, especially during their clinical rotations. This may have repercussions in later years when the students are required to perform in order to give examination in the clinical subjects especially.

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In comparison with the present scenario, students which have passed out in the earlier years, already remember their student days at Karachi Medical and Dental College (KMDC) as their golden years, when the total students in each class were only 50 in number and principles of adult learning⁴ were being followed by creating a learning environment conducive to the academic growth of both students and teachers.

It is therefore a humble request to both the hospital as well as academic administrators to hire more teachers and senior faculty members to overcome the deficiency and ineffective teaching, as well as cater to a division of the students into groups which can be managed by the teaching faculty, in order to overcome the shortage of staff. This would encourage easy communication of the stu-

dents with the teachers as well as allow the teachers to be more focused on teaching and managing the grades of the students allocated to them.

References

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