From Internal Evaluation in Medical Education to National Agency for Quality Assurance in Iran Higher Education: Challenges and Perspectives

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• Received: 28 Aug, 2009 • Accepted: 20 Sep, 2009

Background: Quality of higher education has been drawing more attention over the past two decades. Hence, concerted efforts have been increasingly made to assess and improve higher education quality worldwide. Some of these attempts have led to establishing local, national and international organizations for assessment and accreditation. Based on the above, this study is discussing the answer to the question concerning “To what extent attempts towards quality assessment in Iran have been directed to establish a national agency for assessment and accreditation?”. To address this question, first ground breaking experiences experience of Iran in this regard are described. Then, international experiences and challenges of building a national quality assessment and accreditation in higher education system in general, and in medical education in particular, are reviewed. Finally, perspectives of establishing Iranian Universities Quality Network are analyzed.

Conclusion: Institution building in assessment and accreditation would help strengthening of ownership of quality assurance in faculty members; as a result, continuous quality assessment and improvement of higher education would become an integral part of higher education system.

Key words: Quality, Institution building, Higher education, Medical education, Quality network

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