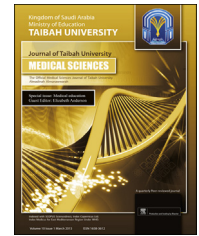




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Editorial Article

Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences: Ten years of existence and our special issue about innovations in medical education



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The volume of scientific material and innovations reported in scientific journals doubles approximately every 15–17 years,¹ and The Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences (JTUMED) is a modest addition to the armamentarium of the existing scholarly literature. This multi-disciplinary quarterly journal caters to the diverse health-related disciplines of medicine, dentistry, pharmacology, applied health sciences, and nursing, with the mission of enriching readers' knowledge of innovative research in their fields of science. After a roaring start in 2005, JTUMED has undergone evolutionary changes, including an increase in frequency from bi-annual to quarterly publication and indexation with SCOPUS ScienceDirect. Since 2012, the journal has been hosted and published by Elsevier Publishers, and the peer review process has been managed by the journal administration. All of the archiving of JTUMED is available on the journal homepage under the umbrella of ScienceDirect. The application for the indexation of JTUMED with PubMed Central has been initiated with positive feedback. There has been a significant increase in the number of international contributors from the Middle East, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, India, China and Malaysia. The recent inclusion of eminent international editorial board members is a testament to the journal's vision to publish and disseminate novel research around

the globe and to move from the national to the international level.

The hallmark of JTUMED has been consistency and regularity, rigorous peer review, and maintenance of the quality of scientific knowledge. All of the accepted articles are subject to proofreading, linguistic and scientific review; this service is free of charge to the contributors. JTUMED has extensively published articles from diverse fields of medical sciences, including medical education.^{2,3} As JTUMED is a scientific product of Taibah University, the journal has dedicated a permanent section for the students where they publish their research under the supervision of faculty staff.⁴ Medical students need to be groomed in their research and scholarly writing as a part of their studies. They should conduct research projects in promoting the domains of independent learning and analytical and problem-solving skills.⁵ JTUMED is probably the only journal in the region that has devoted a permanent section for student research.

As the subject of medical education has undergone significant transformational changes and has now been embedded in the majority of medical schools worldwide, the JTUMED editorial board has selected this discipline for the current special issue. Despite the relevance and vibrant dimensions of medical education, there are major challenges to its application in the medical schools. This special issue is an attempt to highlight some of the challenges to medical education with possible remedies. One challenge is how to incorporate all of the new emergent domains into the existing curricula in order to produce better and safer physicians – people that cater the needs of individuals and communities.⁶ As per principles of medical education, academia has to revise their instructional materials and strategies to integrate more molecular medicine, social sciences, genetics,

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research, palliative care, complementary and alternative medicine, ambulatory care, medical ethics, professionalism, simulation, e-learning, experiential and self-directed learning, and information technology into the existing undergraduate and postgraduate medical curricula.⁷ However, curriculum contents are enormous, and no department will readily agree to eliminate a fraction of its share from the course content. At the same time, it is not practical to simply add a group of new courses to the current contents, which will unnecessarily increase the burden of teaching and learning for the respective stakeholders. However, still, we need a change.

Another challenge to medical education is noted when medical students are taught during clinical rounds how to take a decent history, perform a complete physical examination, and communicate professionally with patients and relatives. On the contrary, in the real world, students witness a busy, worried, and heavily committed faculty struggling to serve both personal and institutional needs. The multi-dimensional principles of medical education such as professionalism,⁸ ethics, communication skills,⁹ time management, and integration have the promise to preserve this face of the eroding clinical environment, which may enable the faculty to serve as competent physicians as well as role models for the students.¹⁰

Another significant challenge to the effectiveness of medical education is the increasing use of digital technology, which has to be embedded in the health curriculum if our educational systems are to remain scientifically viable. A more valid and effective teaching strategy is a combination of face-to-face learning and e-learning, known as blended learning, which has been recognized for having great promise in medical education.¹¹ In addition to the financial burden to the institutions, empirical research is needed to design a high-fidelity digital curriculum based on current understanding of the nature of human learning.¹² In addition, faculty and student training for the appropriate use of the technology needs to be improved. When looking into these challenges, we invited the eminent scholars and academia to write about modern and innovative applications of various dimensions of medical education. Hopefully, this issue will

be a meaningful contribution to the scholarly world and we look forward to readers' valuable feedback.

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