

Community- Based Education: Tikrit University College of Medicine Experience. PART ONE: Concept and Rationale of Community –Based Education.

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Introduction

Tikrit University College of Medicine [TUCOM] is a community based college incorporating PBL and it is the first and only medical school in Iraq to introduce an innovative curriculum [1]. TUCOM/CBE programme constitutes a community based curriculum including an acceptable balance of community based activities through out of the educational settings [6 years of study] [2]. CBE is one of the most powerful and important teaching and learning strategy that allows students to study the sources, nature and magnitude of health and related problems [3]. In CBE, the community plays an important role in determining its own health needs, health problems and to overcome such problems. Furthermore, the students encouraged to learn from the community and assist them to attain their educational objectives [4]. Furthermore, well planning and well implementation of CBE are the important factors that driven the outcome of such innovative education method [5]. Recently, Worley [5] perform analysis of CBE and proposed a model for the key relationship in which student must be an active participant to facilitate high quality learning. He provided evidence for “the role of clinical, institutional, social and interpersonal relationships in providing a framework for describing quality in CBME curricula- the 4R model”

Definitions:

Community- Oriented Education [COE]:

COE is defined as “Education that focuses on both population groups and individual persons which take into account the health needs of the community concerned “[6]. COE is a medical education “that takes into consideration, in all aspects of its operations, the priority health problems of the country in which it is conveyed. Its aim is to produce community-oriented doctors who are able to serve their communities and deal effectively with health problems at primary, secondary and tertiary levels” [7].

Community – Based Education [CBE]:

CBE is defined as a means of implementing community oriented learning programme. Training and learning type that focuses on both population groups and individuals taking into consideration community health needs [8]. CBE may be conducted in rural suburban and urban areas and includes activities that use the community extensively as learning environment. In addition, CBE may be conducted in either primary or secondary care setting [5]. Throughout the educational settings students, teachers, community members, and other sectors representatives are actively engaged [9].

Rationale

The rationale of TUCOM/CBE programme [2, 8] is summarized as below:

1. Provide a better future involvement of the newly graduated students in resolving health priority problems through proper linking of theoretical knowledge gained in the college CBE curriculum with proper practical training.
2. Application of CBE programme provide better elaboration on information which will be better understood and processed as CBE facilitates PBL, providing more control on community health problems, with better chances to learn in an environment that is close to future real professional life in the community, in addition the value of appreciation of team members role in sharing respect and understanding.
3. It will provide the newly graduated students with a better sense of social responsibility and understanding of their community and its related factors.
4. It will help to remove obstacles between the newly graduated students and the community members and improve their assessment, ability to work in a team and leadership skills.
5. The CBE programme will ensure relevant educational processes that help students and newly graduates to acquire the main competences needed for better future professional performance [5 stars doctor], including curative, promotive, preventive, and research based competencies besides other managerial and leadership skills.
6. It will provide a multidisciplinary approach toward improving the quality of health services and health status, through achieving the concept of health for better physical, mental and social wellbeing.
7. Being in more contact with community and political leaders, it will provide more opportunities for partnership with the community, university and the government.
8. It will help students and graduates to better recognize the relationship between risk factors, diseases, and defence mechanisms through better understanding of the natural history of disease.
9. Finally CBE is bringing important contact with important international organization [e.g. WHO, TUFH, WFME, etc] and societies concerned with innovative education.

CBE programme constitutes specific perspectives including ethical issues related to individual patient care in respect to respecting people thoughts, regardless of our personal philosophy, politics and religion, providing effective, relevant education and training to provide medical benefit with less harm; providing the chance for active involvement of the community and achieving justice in the form of equity and equality of healthcare services provision [10]. It fosters appreciation and recognition of social characteristics through being exposed to community problems. It fosters recognition of people rights and basic social services are more guaranteed.

The TUCOM/CBE programme faces problem [after 2003] which is mainly related to lack of clear vision in implementation of this programme, a defect is mainly related to the managers and authorized staff as they with out experience in leadership and they are losing faith in this programme [lack of orientation, and they are not understanding the philosophy of CBE] leading to confusion in implementation of the activities and educational objectives and intended learning outcome.

Competencies:

The competencies to be acquired in application of CBE programme are [4, 8, 11, 12, 13]:

1. Ability to work in community to stimulate self-care and healthy life.
2. Able to deliver preventive and curative care for community.

3. Ability to conduction of health education to the community.
4. Able to act as health team worker.
5. Have the ability to conduct research activities.
6. Gain problem solving ability on both individuals and community levels...
7. Able to conduct self-learning and self- evaluation activity.
8. Able to act as leader for a team or committee...
9. Achieve health promotion, disease prevention, unnecessary suffering, and disability through sound direction of their and community efforts.
10. Maintain and improve personal competence through continuous learning from work experience.
11. Ability for services management.
12. Ability to collaborate with other sectors involved in community development.
13. Try to find solution for unfamiliar problems.

Educational objectives of CBE programme.

The main objectives of TUCOM/CBE programme are to [2]:

1. Give student opportunity to contact with relevant community health problems and how to set their priorities...
2. Know levels of Healthcare System in Iraq.
3. Know the units of primary health care centres.
4. How to take proper medical histories from healthy people.
5. Acquisition of essential medical skills related to primary health care.
6. Know geographical and demographical characteristics factors of the community and its relation to community health problems.
7. Perform scientific analysis of community health problems.
8. How to work in a team with others students, health staff, and community members.
9. How to design community research project.

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