

Is Pathology a Basic Science Subject?

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It is shocking to see that pathology is not included among Clinical Science Subjects by Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC). It's included among Basic Sciences while Radiology is considered a clinical subject by PMDC!

It is well known that pathology is the backbone of medicine. It not only relates with all disciplines of medicine but many a times it plays key role in establishing the diagnosis and imparting the most appropriate and most optimal management of the diseases. Training in pathology encompasses thorough and sound clinical training. No pathologist could discharge his duties without vigorous routine interaction with his colleagues in different areas of medicine and surgery. He must have in depth and clear understanding of the disease, their impact and management on patients, relatives, society and the world. Without active participation in numerous intra and interdepartmental weekly conferences, seminars and meetings one can't even dream to become a pathologist. These dynamic interactions are lifelong useful learning and teaching tools. A competent and vibrant pathologist can play important role not only in diagnoses but also in management of the diseases. It therefore does not make sense to exclude pathology from the clinical sciences disciplines and characterize it as merely a basic science subject such as anatomy, physiology and biochemistry.

The issue is merely not academic only; but rather it carries serious consequences and repercussions. In clinical disciplines such as pathology appointment of doctors with simple PhD degree but without approved accredited clinical specialization will simply lead to disasters in all areas of planning, teaching, patient management and research. A PhD in one

minute subject of haematology will know nothing about numerous haematological disorders. Unfortunately based on the titles and designations sometimes bureaucracy assigns important tasks of national interest and huge budgeting to such naïve people with devastating results. The Clinical role of Pathology is also obvious from the terms we use for different disciplines of Pathology such as Surgical Pathology, Laboratory Medicine, Transfusion Medicine and Clinical Chemistry.

In United States of America accredited residency in Pathology has same features and rules and regulations as in other clinical disciplines such as internal medicine, paediatrics, gynaecology & surgery. It's rather very unfortunate that Pakistan Medical & Dental Council on recommendations of some Pathologists included pathology in basic sciences category. May be the motivating factor had been additional allowances granted to the teachers of basic sciences; however this does not justify bracketing solid clinical subjects pathology with Basic Sciences. It not only defies all logic and senses but also has very serious implications as mentioned above. It's high time that PMDC include pathology among clinical disciplines and all vigorous rules and regulations for clinical subjects are applied to it. A proper Pathology Department is the hub of all Clinical disciplines and at times pathologist is called Doctors' doctor. It is therefore requested from concerned societies and authorities to consolidate clinical training through interaction of Pathology Department with other clinical departments.