

Integrated Examinations in 4th & 5th Year of MBBS

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Integrated modular examinations in Medical Colleges had gained worldwide acceptance due to its obvious advantages. However it has been observed that some medical colleges are not conducting integrated examinations in their 4th and final years. One fails to understand why it is not done. Of course taking traditional style annual examination is far easy and more convenient to the busy physicians but does it extracts from the candidates what it must. I mean the holistic and all multidimensional comprehension of the subject.

Instead of holding separately one day examination of one subject e.g. Internal medicine, the examination on one day should cover one block from all angles. For example, cardiovascular system is to be evaluated on the same day by physicians, surgeons, pediatricians and gynecologists along with pathologists, radiologists, psychiatrists and others. 15-20 stations will make it possible. In this way the candidate will be evaluated on cardiovascular diseases related to medicine, surgery, pediatrics, gynecology, laboratory medicine, radiology and psychology etc.

No need to say that the stations both stationary and interactive must be highly structured. There must be no compulsion to keep the same stations for all the students as chances for leakage of information are quite high which would make examination unfair and deceive its very objective. Instead stations of approximately same difficulty and discrimination indices may be constituted to totally eliminate the chances of leakage of information. Similarly there is no need to have the same person sitting throughout

the day. With change of batch the evaluator may also change! The stationary stations can be totally computer based. Inclusion of pathologists and radiologists may also be quite useful in terms of evaluating the candidate's comprehension of the tests, their costs, their sensitivity & specificity, their priority, their limitations, ethical issues and their hazards if any.

Summing it up instead of asking few questions about one subject a multipronged evaluation from all disciplines covering diseases in all age groups, in both genders and from all aspects from history, physical examination, investigations, interpretations, management and ethical & financial considerations will be much better evaluation tool. To say that in hospital setting we have isolated wards i.e. medicine, surgery etc. is not a valid argument against integrated examinations in 4th and final year as routinely in most patients consultations are sought by different specialties depending on patient's problems. When we are evaluating Block on soft tissue and bone instead of general surgeons it's better to involve orthopedic surgeon and rehabilitation physician. Of course pediatricians, gynecologists, pathologists and radiologists will also have their input. With such a holistic approach a future doctor will be thoroughly examined and evaluated and since the candidates will be well informed about this they will be thoroughly prepared for it. We had conducted annual examination at Azad Jammu Kashmir Medical College and found it to quite feasible and practical.