

# **Elections in Professional Medical Organizations and Examining Bodies**

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This issue is not at all “Political” but rather very genuine scientific and humane one. The Professional Organizations play key role in formulating national policies regarding medical education, training, research and healthcare. Obviously, quality of the Professional Organizations and their input depend upon the quality of the people at the helms of affairs of these organizations. Organizations like Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC) and College of Physicians & Surgeons of Pakistan (CPSP) not only give inputs in important Governmental and Public affairs regarding healthcare and regulation of doctors’ education and training, private organizations like Pakistan Medical Associations (PMA) may also have important say in some affairs. The administration and office bearer of these organizations are mostly “elected” ones. Question is how truly and genuinely they do represent the vast majority of the members of these organizations. For example, if the elections are compromised in a way that many highly qualified and competent physicians are not even able to cast their votes because of cumbersome procedures, long queues, waste of time and expenses then the elections can’t be termed fair, representative and transparent. This will result into deprivation of the professional organizations from input of many honest, able, competent and valuable members. As these organizations have important effects on the society and particularly in all aspects of healthcare system, it’s not only disaster for the organization but also for the society. Such elections then in a way become sham and may serve only some special interest groups and individuals at expense of the medical profession and the society. Special interest individuals and groups may deliberately make elections difficult and unfair to get their own selfish interests.

Doctors generally have very busy schedules so it will be very foolish to think that all such busy physicians will travel long distances, buy expensive

air tickets and stand in cues for hours to vote. And why to waste time when voting can be achieved in much easier way and with no expense. While throughout the world postal ballots are used in professional organizations to facilitate voting in order to get the valuable input of maximum number of their members; however astonishingly this is not so in Pakistan where elections in some of these bodies are often manipulated by making the procedure extremely difficult. Out right rigging through various means are also carried out. We are not here pinpointing any particular organization but we are definitely raising serious and important concern toward all those organizations where such deficiencies are prevalent. Unfortunately, while the developed world cares about talents and brain, the developing countries have an unfortunate attitude to let the brain drain out of the organizations and the countries. In some medical schools up to 70% of the MBBS class leaves their countries to serve the developed countries making all public expense on them null and void and let the country deprive from a good healthcare system. It’s high time to act now and grow beyond ourselves to serve the society; the affairs of the organizations and the society cannot and must not be left to the select “Professional Politicians”. Each one of us must contribute to the better healthcare by giving our best input and all hurdles must be removed from tendering such input. All organizations must allow postal ballots to its members. This is the era of electronics, mobile phones and internet. Voting can be made so convenient as the click on the keyboard. If that can’t be done because of fear of internet fraud and hacking postal ballots must be allowed. Through fair elections true and honest representation can reach in to the professional organizations. On the other hand, elections may not be good idea for examining bodies as this may lead to dirty politics and group manipulation. These examining and certifying bodies should have strict criteria for selection of examiners based on outstanding academic status

individuals with blemish free professional carriers. In this regard we have good example of USA where various professional colleges have fair elections with postal balloting but such elections are not held in American Boards which are examining bodies. In Pakistan also, we should separate the two types of organizations. The examining bodies must be separate and no political manipulations should be

allowed in them for very obvious reasons. The elected professional organizations can deal with all aspects of the organizations except examinations. Independent Examination Boards must be constituted which should be comprised of highly competent renowned professional with no stain on their character and carriers.