

Landscape of Social Accountability in Health Professional Education:

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Social accountability of healthcare educational institutions is an emerging concept in healthcare professional education. World Health Organization defines social accountability as an obligation of medical colleges to direct teaching and research activities towards community health concerns. According to this it's a mandatory responsibility of healthcare institutions to focus on research and education aligned with key community healthcare issues. It obligates medical colleges to direct their teaching and learning activities to address health needs of the society and all stakeholders should define the basic community needs and concerns by mutual collaboration. It also mandates incorporation of four key values: quality, equity, relevance and cost effectiveness in healthcare education and healthcare practice¹. The main challenge for healthcare educators is to implement community-based healthcare education. A global shift is required in curriculum to meet priority health concerns at national and international levels. Integration of social accountability framework at undergraduate healthcare education will resolve these concerns. Although literature research reveals that measuring social accountability is a global challenge but efforts should be made to develop an innovative framework for social accountability indicators aligned with our own national community issues^{2,3,4}. The objective of this research article is to emphasize the importance of constructing an innovative framework of social accountability in health professional education of Pakistan, to shift the focus from input and process to outcome and impact in medical education program evaluation. Social accountability is most important norm for sustainable healthcare education and strategic healthcare management⁵. System-thinking framework is required for building evidence of socially accountable medical institutions. Current program evaluation standards of medical and dental colleges by accreditation body of Pakistan essentially focuses on input and process level while social accountability widens the scope to include processes occurring upstream by focusing on outcome and impact. Changing health needs of society

should be considered in accreditation standards by mandating incorporation of social accountability for medical and dental colleges. Program evaluation and program monitoring should be focused on outcome and impact more than input and process. Program monitoring refers to routine collection of data to ensure that program is on track and data collection is done as a part of administrative procedure while program evaluation is systematic collection of data to judge the effectiveness, adequacy and efficiency of program. Program evaluation mandates reliable and valid methods of data collection as Kilpatrick model or CIPP model. It also requires systematic data analysis for the purpose of demonstrating that results are aligned with vision, mission, curriculum structure, educational outcomes and impact. Comprehensive program evaluation also requires proper systematic dissemination of evaluation finding to all stakeholders. Communication and dissemination are integral and essential for enhancing program evaluation experience. It is commonly seen that most important part of program evaluation that is dissemination of findings to all stakeholders and implementation of action plan based on evaluation findings are neglected during process of evaluation. There is need of inculcating evaluation thinking into the organizational culture of medical and dental institutions. Involvement of expert medical educationist and external reviewers will further validates the results and broaden the base of experience of quality management in medical education^{6,7,8}. The second challenge is development of community need based curriculum in collaboration with all stakeholders. For this purpose, service learning and community-based participatory research should be promoted in undergraduate healthcare education. Service learning prepares students to work in communities of need. It implies thoughtfully organized learning experience with active participation and community coordination focusing on community needs. Medical students should understand how environment can affect patient's well-being⁹. Qualitative measures as written reflections, poster presentations, essays and journaling can be used to assess student's outcomes. Student's outcomes can be used to determine that the objectives of service learning are achieved. Community based participatory research is multidimensional process which supports collaboration and equitable partnership with stakeholders for co-learning and capacity building. It also mandates dissemination of research finding and knowledge gained by all stakeholders involved

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to facilitate ongoing reflection about the inevitable dilemmas which promotes mutually beneficial partnership. The purpose of this practice is to train a cohort of students on principle of community partnership who are well prepared to practice in rapidly changing healthcare community environment in all areas including rural and remote areas¹⁰.

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Khadija Farrukh: Conception, Drafting Article

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