



Develop talents to increase productivity: report of the ninth national medical science olympiad in Islamic Republic of Iran in year 2017

SHAHRAM YAZDANI¹, FAKHROSADAT HOSSEINI¹, EBRAHIM KALANTAR MEHRJERDI², MITRA AMINI^{3*}

¹School of Medical Education Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran; ²Department of e-learning at Virtual University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran; ³Clinical Education Research Center, Shiraz university of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

*Corresponding author:

Mitra Amini

Clinical Education Research Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

Tel: +98 71 372333064; Email: aminim@sums.ac.ir

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Dear Editor,

Extracurricular activities for the gifted and talented students in Iran derive from the belief that students with high potentials are expected to make great help for the health care of the community. One of these activities is holding medical science Olympiads. In the previous meeting report about medical science Olympiad in year 2011, a unique experience of Islamic Republic of Iran was reported. The Olympiad was held in three areas of basic sciences, clinical reasoning and management by participation of high rank medical students from all over the country in two stages: individual and group (1-4).

After performing 8 Olympiads in the country, the ninth Olympiad was held in September 2017 in Tehran, Iran differently with more emphasis on creativity and productivity.

While creativity in health care is mostly supposed to be innovations in surgical devices, medications, and procedures, we believed that it also relates to other health care disciplines like basic sciences, medical education, philosophy of medicine and management. Creativity in these fields is a newer concept that may result in finding novel solutions to health care and educational

problems and challenges such as improving patient care and coordinating care across multiple disciplines and difficult conditions.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences was the host of the Ninth National Medical Science Olympiad in September 2017 under direct supervision of Ministry of Health and Medical Education. This Olympiad was held in five areas including basic sciences, clinical medicine, medical education, philosophy of medicine and health care management. All top ranked students in medical sciences (such as medicine, pharmacy, nursing, health management, dentistry, etc.) from all over the country had the chance of participating in this Olympiad. In Iran integration of medical education and health care delivery system has started in 50 universities of medical sciences all over the country (5). 2151 students from these universities participated in the individual Olympiad exam. Then 30 teams in each of the five areas (total 450 teams) were selected 55 experts in five scientific committees constructed the Olympiad questions in individual and team stages. A unique experience in the Ninth Olympiad was using a novel and creative project based assignment for each team in each of the five areas. These projects were Evidence-based

decision making, public private partnership, early clinical exposure, medical futility and autonomic modulation on the brain functional connectivity related to depression.

75 percent of the students stated that they were satisfied with these innovative and creative projects in different areas. 84 percent of the faculties reported that this kind of Olympiad increased students' motivation and led them to compare issues friendly with each other in a scientific environment. 69.25 percent of the students reported that increasing the number of teams in this Olympiad for problem solving activities was a very good experience for them and ascertained that such activities should be included in the formal curriculum of medical schools.

The main shortcoming in this Olympiad reported by the students was the competitive nature of the exam and subjectivity in scoring the projects in some areas.

Performing such Olympiads is essential in discovering talented students and developing their capabilities to promote health systems.

Although academic merit is not the only indicator of success in health science disciplines, designing additional programs for gifted and

talented students is warranted to help academically talented students to further their knowledge.

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