



## Considering social accountability in rehabilitation therapy school

HAJAR SHIEH<sup>1</sup>, MITRA AMINI<sup>1\*</sup>, FATEMEH MIR<sup>1</sup>, PARISA NABEIEI<sup>1</sup>, JAVAD KOJURI<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clinical Education Research Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

\*Corresponding author:

Mitra Amini,

Clinical Education Research Center, Sadra-Sina Halls Complex, Neshat Ave., Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

**Tel:** +98 71 32333064; **Email:** mitraamini51@yahoo.com

Please cite this paper as:

Shieh H, Amini M, Mir F, Nabeiei P, Kojuri J. Considering social accountability in rehabilitation therapy school. *J Adv Med Educ Prof.* 2017;5(3):93-94.

Received: 16 March 2016

Accepted: 4 June 2017

As you know, there is increasing attention in social accountability concept for medical and other health professional schools. Despite the uniqueness of the concept of social accountability, it has different definitions in various fields. The World Health Organization (WHO) has described social accountability generally as follows: “the obligation to direct education, research and service activities toward addressing the priority health concerns of community, region, or nation”(1). Applied to health professional schools, the idea of social accountability recognizes it’s prospective for transforming community by acting throughout the educational, research and healthcare delivery, on a mixture of social determinants of health factors and for helping to make a proficient and equitable health system.

One of the health professional schools in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences is the School of Rehabilitation Therapy. This school is committed to lead and stimulate positive changes that improve quality of lives through rehabilitation education, research and practice. As part of this commitment, the mission of this school is to teach occupational therapists, physiotherapists and physiotherapy scientists who contribute to well-being and welfare of the community. This school is recognized for excellent social accountability.

In a qualitative study, we developed the indicators for assessing the concept of social accountability in this school based on the extensive

literature review and expert opinions. Finally, 57 indicators were determined for assessing the social accountability and used for assessment of social accountability in this school (2).

The results showed that considering the healthcare needs of the community for education and research, provision of interdisciplinary education for students, addition of the idea of social accountability in the accreditation system, teaching professionalism to students before the clinical courses, and cooperation with other stakeholders (including academic health centers, physician communities, and other relevant paramedical schools) were reported as some of the strengths of this school. Some of the weaknesses of this school were lack of continuous evaluation programs for precise analysis of the current needs of the society and lack of correspondence between some of the elective training programs with the accountability approach. What’s more, the willingness of the community to participate in the health programs, lifestyle changes and change in the public approval for services in educational fields are some of the existing trends in this school.

It seems necessary that social accountability concept of rehabilitation therapy schools should be further taken into consideration as a means of improving the outcomes of rehabilitation education, research and services.

In conclusion, all health professional schools

should contribute to the needs of society by educating their students well in this field. Through accomplishment of these aims, these schools can play the maximum effective role in the health of the community.

**Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

## References

1. Beolen C, Heck JE. Defining and measuring the social accountability of medical school. Geneva: World Health Organization; 1995.
2. Shieh H, Ghanavati S, Nabeiei P, Amini M. Exploration of social accountability indicators in medical Science schools in Iran. *IJVLMS*. 2016;7(1): 2-13.