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Competency based undergraduate curriculum in pharmacology for the Indian medical graduate: challenges in assessment

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Recently the Medical Council of India has released the competency-based undergraduate curriculum for Indian medical graduates. This is a major shift from the traditional curriculum and will ensure integration across the

disciplines along with a focus on necessary skills and attitudes required for a clinician to practice in the community. A set of broader competencies were designed that also includes an emphasis on leadership, communication, patient safety and lifelong learning. Competencies among various disciplines have been identified. The learning objectives and their assessment strategies can be derived from subject-based competencies to ensure the alignment between outcomes, teaching and learning methods and their assessment. In pharmacology sixty-four competencies were identified in the knowledge domain, fourteen in skills & seven communication domains. The learning outcomes were aligned with the different stages of the assessment in alignment with Millers pyramid.

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Recently the Medical council of India has released the competency based undergraduate curriculum for Indian medical graduates. This is a major shift from the traditional curriculum and will ensure integration across the disciplines along with focus on necessary skills and attitudes required for a clinician to practice in the community. A set of broader competencies were designed that also includes emphasis on leadership, communication, patient safety and lifelong learning. Competencies among various disciplines have been identified. The learning objectives and their assessment strategies can be derived from subject based competencies to ensure the alignment between outcomes, teaching and learning methods and their assessment. In pharmacology sixty-four competencies were identified in knowledge domain, fourteen in skills & seven communication domains [1]. The learning outcomes were aligned with the different stages of the assessment in alignment with Millers pyramid [2].

The assessment of the disciplines i.e., pharmacology in our context in all the defined domains will be a challenge in the proposed competency-based model. For example, the learning outcomes of a subjects i.e., pharmacology in multidisciplinary Problem based learning session will be assessed by whom? The assessment in silos and its repetition will appear as a major challenge in subject based approach. Studies showed that without integrated assessment, the notion of the integration remains confined up to teaching and learning methods only. The system-based module/themes appeared to an effective tool for ensuring both horizontal and vertical integration that break the barriers of the disciplines of preclinical & Para clinical subjects [3]. The integrated system-based

modules provide a chance for the integrated assessment along with interdisciplinary teaching & learning methods [4]. Feedback and formative assessment are the core elements of competency-based education that enables the learner to track their progress & develop the self-evaluation skills across the programme. This requires an effective training of faculty members in alignment with current trends of medical education along with efective planning & implementation of the proposed model.

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