

# Medical and physiotherapy undergraduates' perception on the importance of roles and qualities of a medical teacher

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## Abstract

**Introduction & Objectives:** Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka conducts MBBS and BSc physiotherapy degree programs following SPICES model where educators have to play diverse roles in order to fulfil their responsibilities. Looking at them from a student's perspective will help understand what students perceive as important roles of educators and help the students understand the educators' different capacities. An effective medical educator possesses a range of qualities. Looking at them from students' point of view indicates what they expect from teachers as professionals.

**Methods:** Harden and Crosby (2000) paper on 12 roles of a medical teacher was the conceptual framework for this study. Based on previous literature a questionnaire was developed with 20 different roles and 15 qualities of an educator. Study followed an analytical cross-sectional design with participation of 188 physiotherapy and medical undergraduates.

**Results:** Study findings indicated that the students' perception on importance of different roles of teachers had a close overlap with Harden's 12 roles. Information provider as a lecturer in class room in clinical settings, in practical settings, developing learning materials for lectures, clinical educators etc. Importance of being an examiner and curriculum planner was rated relatively low by students. Students perceived good communication skills, professional skills, knowledge and respect for patients as most important qualities in an educator.

**Conclusion:** Findings will help educators understand what learners expect from them and help students understand the different capacities of educators.

**Keywords:** *12 Roles of a Medical Teacher; Ideal Medical Teacher; Student Perception; Survey*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of teaching is to facilitate personal growth and development that impact the professional, social and political aspects of learners (Galbraith, 2004). Since global trend of medical education is moving towards a more humanistic approach to patient care, medical teachers need to become educators, interacting with individual students (McLean, 2001).

Faculty of Medicine, Colombo, Sri Lanka conducts a 5 year MBBS degree programme and a 4 year BSc. Physiotherapy degree programme. Both programmes follow innovative student-centred curricula and incorporate features of SPICES model in their teaching. This context involves diverse learners, various teaching

methods and a range of teaching settings. This student-centred learning environment expects the teachers to guide the learners with diverse abilities, knowledge and different levels of comprehension towards self-directed study. In order to fulfil their responsibilities in this context teachers have to play a variety of roles.

Harden and Crosby (2000) have identified that with rapid changes in medical education the role of the medical teacher is changing. They have identified 12 roles of the medical teacher falling into six categories.

According to Cross (1995) discrepant perceptions of roles and behaviours in clinical education may have an adverse effect on student learning. So it is important that