

The need for more visibility and expansion of SEARAME

The last decade has witnessed medical education gaining wider recognition and acceptance in the South East Asian Region. In the past, medical education was perceived as a philosophical discipline lacking practical value. Research in medical education was considered superficial and inferior to clinical or laboratory research. Today, most medical schools in the region have established medical education units. Curriculum reforms are taking place in many medical faculties. There is a growing number of academics who choose medical education as a full-time career.

This situation creates a window of opportunity for the South East Asian Regional Association for Medical Education (SEARAME) to improve the standard of medical education in the region. As one of the six regional organizations under the umbrella of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and as an association working very closely with the WHO-South East Asian Regional Office (WHO-SEARO), SEARAME has the mandate to take up a leadership role in improving medical education in the SEA region. Possible approaches for SEARAME include creating a culture conducive to medical education reforms, establishing regional collaborations, promoting medical education research and supporting motivated academics to improve their expertise in medical education in order to act as agents of change.

However, if SEARAME is to emerge as a regional leader in medical education, the visibility and strength of the organisation need to improve. To a certain extent the journal (SEAJME) has improved the visibility of SEARAME, even though many more initiatives need to be taken if we are to be considered regional leaders in medical education. The membership base is the key to the sustainability and the strength of an association. Many years since its revival, the membership base of SEARAME is yet to expand beyond its founder members. Repeated requests to apply for membership receive a very low response. This is an area for concern.

We hope that the readership of SEAJME will show an active interest in joining SEARAME to make the organization viable and stronger.

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