

## Brief Communication

# Accreditation Is It a Fashion or Necessity ?

**Suliman Abdulaziz Jastaniah**

*Fellowship (trauma), Canada, Department of surgery, Umm-Alqura faculty of medicine, Makkah, KSA.*

**Elbagir Ali A. Elfaki**

*Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, Umm-Alqura University, Makkah, KSA.*

### Correspondence:

**Dr. Suliman Abdulaziz Jastaniah.** FRCSE. FACS.

Associate Professor of surgery

Umm Alqura University - Medicine  
P.O.Box 1821 , Jeddah 21441  
Saudi Arabia  
sa\_jastaniah@hotmail.com

**Professor. Elbagir Ali A. Elfaki** MBBS. FRCS. FRCSI. FACS.

**Professor of surgery, Umm-Alqura faculty of Medicine, Makkah**

Saudi Arabia Mobile: 0558803253

e.mail: albagirali@hotmail.com

*Received: March 02, 2011*

*Accepted: March 27, 2011*

## الاعتماد الأكاديمي هل هو موضة أم ضرورة ؟

سليمان عبد العزيز جستاني \* الباقر علي احمد الفكي

قسم الجراحة- كلية الطب- جامعة أم القرى- مكة المكرمة- المملكة العربية السعودية مستشفى النور التخصصي- مكة المكرمة

### الملخص العربي

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الورقة هو التقديم لمفهوم الاعتماد الأكاديمي كليات الطب. ناقشنا هنا أهمية الاعتماد الأكاديمي والتعريف والأغراض، والفوائد ومعايير وإجراءات اعتماد المؤسسات الطبية مع خارطة طريق الاعتماد الأكاديمي لكونه ضرورة وتطرفتنا باختصار القصد أيا للنقاش بشأن اعتماد المؤسسات الطبية مع خارطة طريق الاعتماد الأكاديمي العالمية وذلك لكون أهميته للتعلم يلجأ به المتعلمون ويهدفون من خلالها إلى تطوير مهنهم ومنها العلم على التطوير والتحديث. نناقش هنا أهمية الاعتماد الأكاديمي ومبادئ ضمان جودة التعليم والاعتماد.

## ABSTRACT

It is argued that accreditation is one of the influential mechanisms for assessing the performance of healthcare organizations and improving the quality and safety of healthcare services. Its aim is to encourage continuous improvement of quality rather than simply maintaining minimal levels of performance. It is also described as the public recognition emanating from the achievement of specific standards by a health care which is demonstrated after an independent external assessment of the organization's performance. Accreditation process involves evaluating programs in light of their own training models and goals and judging the degree to which a program has achieved those goals and objectives. It is the processes by which the programme's outcomes should be reached; rather it evaluates a programme's success in achieving outcomes and goals that are consistent with its stated mission (including religious mission, if relevant). Accreditation is viewed as an important process in the continuing development of quality health service management curricula and preparing competent practitioners for the health care field.

### Introduction and Background

Medicine is becoming increasingly globalized, as manifested by the worldwide growth in the number of medical schools.<sup>1</sup> Presently, as of 2010, there were 2,200 recognized and operating medical schools (public and private) in 177 countries or territories listed in the International Medical Education Directory (IMED).<sup>2</sup> Within this listed medical institutes, more than 300 located in the 22 countries of EMRO region. Relatively little is known about the characteristics or the quality of these institutions. In a world with this expansion in medical schools and rapidly changing technology, certifying an adequate process of education is challenging.

There is significant variation in the structure and quality of undergraduate medical education around the world. Their graduates are educated in countries with diverse educational systems, including variations in teaching traditions, curricular models, instructional methods, clinical opportunities, assessment principles, and available resources<sup>3</sup>. A rising urgency of accountability and accreditation for medical education developed in the late 20th century, also as a result of individuals and societal expectations with the rise in the numbers of physicians who migrate from their native countries to other parts of the world for medical education and graduate training opportunities. Accreditation is viewed as an important process in the continuing development of quality health service management curricula and preparing competent practitioners for the health care field<sup>4</sup>. The need for starting this process has come both from a self felt requirement of the rapid growth of medical schools and an external initiative.<sup>5</sup>

Along with global expectations the concept of accreditation is becoming a necessity and important issue for learners, educators, regulatory bodies and the public in general. Accreditation processes can encourage institutional improvement and help promote high-quality education experiences.<sup>6,7</sup>

## **What is accreditation and what its purpose?**

Accreditation is a process by which a group of peers and medical education experts systematically review every facet of a medical institution programme and its contributing elements, and determine whether the quality of the education provided to the students meets the high standards expected. It is a procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks<sup>8</sup>. Accreditation is also known as a process of quality assurance aiming to foster programme improvement and continuously upgrade the educational and service quality. It is fundamental to be based on standards which is a statement of excellence, developed by peers, against which conformity of the agency is evaluated. The standards for accreditation are set by a peer review board whose members include faculty from various accredited colleges and universities and perhaps accredited bodies. These standards can be international, regional, national or sub-national (in countries with large numbers of medical schools).<sup>9</sup>

The basic characteristics of accreditation its prevailing sense of volunteerism but strongly recommended, strong tradition of self-regulation, reliance on evaluation techniques and primary concern with quality.

### **Purpose and benefits of accreditation:**

An important factor in realizing a successful career is choosing a reputable institute. Institutes that have been through the accreditation process are more likely to offer degrees those employers, clients and recruiters recognize. By accreditation the institute will: ensure the accountability of educational institutions and provide public confidence in educational processes. Also institutional strengths can be identified, and strategies can be put in place to ensure strengths are maintained. Any problems or issues requiring action can be addressed. Accreditation decisions are usually limited to a fixed and stated period of time, after which the institution or programme is required to engage with a more or less rigorous re-accreditation process.<sup>10</sup>

### **Types of Accreditation:**

Two recognized types:

- 1- Institutional accreditation: Most accreditation is institutional, meaning an entire college is accredited. This gives credibility to the college as a whole. This type of accreditation can be given by either a “regional accreditation agency” or a “national accreditation agency.”
- 2- Specialized and programmatic accreditation: Certain specialized professional programs are accredited independently of their parent institution. There are specialized accrediting bodies for these programs.

What is the difference between program accreditation and institutional accreditation?

Program Accreditation: refers to the accreditation of academic courses such as liberal arts, sciences, education, commerce, law, engineering, nursing, etc.

Institutional Accreditation: refers to the accreditation of the school, college, universities or institution as a whole. Only when all the programs of an institution are accredited may that particular institution be considered an accredited institution.

### **Road map and accreditation process:**

The accreditation process requires educational programs to provide assurances that their graduates exhibit general professional competencies that are appropriate for entry to the next stage of their training, and that serve as the foundation for life-long learning and proficient medical care. In order for potential institute to proceed with the accreditation process smoothly, they must meet the general standards set by the peer review accreditation and other accepted global rules for accreditation. Each institute is typically assessed using the following pathway: First of all the institute should be legible for accreditation and evaluated in terms of the appropriateness and adequacy of:

- Mission, objectives and Goals.
- Student Requirements for Admissions.
- Services Available to Students.
- Quality of Education.
- Reputation of Faculty.

### **Necessity of accreditation:**

Most of us if not all have learned important material from unaccredited programmes over the course of our career. This is not to say that so called unaccredited programmes do not have educational value.

But on the regional and global movement of health professionals, the complexity of international labour markets and trade agreements make render such procedure as accreditation as a mandatory element of any educational program.. In addition, the demands of different regulatory bodies for well defined graduates competences, safe doctors and fitness-to-practice add much pressure on all health professionals' education institutes and governments to start initiating and sustaining national and institutional systems of accreditation as soon as possible. All these factors began to pressure institutions to prove their worth in clear ways.

## **CONCLUSION**

The accreditation is expected to help today doctors to cope with the explosion in medical and scientific knowledge and technologies by acquiring the abilities of lifelong self learning.<sup>11</sup>

For institution accreditation is expected to initiate and promote culture of external evaluation and self-review, and to assist in resource mobilization. With globalization (manifested by expansion in trade in health services accreditation and in numbers of migrating doctors) can be a tool for international recognition and categorization of medical schools.<sup>12</sup>

## REFERENCES

1. Boulet J, Bede C, McKinley D, Norcini J. An overview of the world's medical schools. *Med Teach.* 2007;29:20–26.
2. FAIMER“ foundation of advancement of international medical education and research, Philadelphia19104-2685,USA.2011. boulet@faimer.org.
3. The Commission (2010). Commission on Education of Health Professionals for the 21st Century. Education of health pro-fessionals for the 21st Century: a global independent commission. *Lancet.* 2010 ;375:1137-1138.
4. Hallock JA, McKinley D, Boulet J. Migration of doctors for undergraduate medical education. *Med Teach.* 2007;29:98–105.
5. Sukkar M Y. Accreditation of medical schools in the Sudan. *Khartoum Medical Journal* 2008; 1,1 , 49-50
6. Karle H. International trends in medical education: Diversification contra convergence. *Med Teach.* 2004;26:205–206.
7. Zanten M, Norcini JJ, Boulet JR, Simon F..( Overview of accreditation of undergraduate medical education programmes worldwide. *Med edu.* 2008 Sep;42(9):930-7.
8. ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996).
9. World Health Organization, World Federation of Medical Education. Accreditation of medical education: report of a technical meeting, Schaefergarden, Copenhagen, Denmark, 4-6 October 2004, PP 1-25
10. Vlăsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., and Pârlea, D., 2004, Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions (Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES) Papers on Higher Education, ISBN 92-9069-178-6.
11. World Health Organization, World Federation of Medical Education. Accreditation of medical education: report of a technical meeting, Schaefergarden, Copenhagen, Denmark, 4-6 October 2004, 1-25.
12. World Health Organization Eastern Meditteranean Regional Office, Accreditation of hospitals and medical education institutions: A. Hospitals. Cairo, 2004.