

Amalgamation of medical universities in Tehran Province

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Governmental universities of medical sciences (and health services) in Iran, beyond teaching and research duties, are responsible for providing health services to residents of specified geographical areas [1].

Parts of the health services are provided directly through medical university staffs and students; the university has also oversight on health services of non-governmental public and private sectors. Thus, chancellors of governmental medical universities in Iran, in addition to teaching and research vice-chancellors, have also other deputies such as "Health", "Food & Drug" and "Administration & Support". They normally dedicate considerable parts of their time and resources on health service provision.

Tehran Province with a population of more than 12.5 million (estimated for 2010), had been divided between three Universities of Medical Sciences since early 1980s; Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS), and Shahid-Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBMU). On 30.10.2010, the Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education (MOHME) issued a letter for amalgamation of IUMS with two other major medical universities in Tehran. Based on this decision, education and research sectors including teaching hospi-

tals of IUMS were merged with TUMS and other parts joined SBMU [2].

IUMS had more than 35 years experience in education, research and health service provision. It included six schools, 20 research centers, 10 teaching hospitals, and 16 non-teaching hospitals; more than 6.6 million inhabitants in the west of Tehran were covered by IUMS. At the time of amalgamation, more than 700 faculty members and about 7000 students were active in IUMS [3]. Following integration, all faculty members, students and research or educational officers of IUMS joined TUMS. At present, tens of thousands of graduates of IUMS are doing education, research, studies in higher degrees or health service provision around the world; all records of IUMS alumni were transferred to TUMS. Thus, academic affairs of IUMS graduates will also be done by TUMS.

There were eight scientific peer-reviewed journals being published with the administrative support of IUMS [2]. All these journals, including Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, will be published with support of TUMS with new addresses and websites.

New TUMS (after amalgamation of IUMS and previous TUMS) has ten schools, 69 research centers, 25 teaching and 3 non-teaching hospitals and covers a geographical area in South and East of Tehran province with 2.9 mil-

lions inhabitants [4]. TUMS has been enriched with academic resources while the workload of non-teaching services has not been increased proportionally; this can be a starting point for an explosive improvement in academic indices for this university. On the other hand, some national experts are worried about the methodology used and outcomes of amalgamation such as beginning of disintegration of medical education and health service provision in Iran [5] and its negative impact on academic performance of SBMU.

I wish to see brilliant outcomes of the decision for students and staff of all three affected universities and its positive impact on health of population.

References

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