



Redefining prosthodontic curriculum: Converging towards higher standards

The dental curriculum is not just exhaustive; it is also dynamic and continuously evolving. This is as true of the prosthodontic curriculum as of that of the other branches of dentistry. Educators and teachers are constantly faced with the challenge of instilling in students the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for rendering quality oral health care. Keeping ourselves abreast of curricular innovations taking place across the world and adapting the same to our needs is important. Dental education needs to be current and relevant if it is to meet the needs of today's students and tomorrow's practitioners.

Quality assurance, benchmarking, and assessment form an integral part of curriculum development. In the academic environment, we very often find that students have individual learning styles; this must be recognized and accommodated. The educational process should incorporate reflection by the learner as an important way of self-assessment; it can serve as the basis for self-directed corrective measures. For example, if the student is able to reflect back on the clinical steps involved in a procedure and identify the difficulties encountered while carrying out a particular procedure, stress could be laid on improving the deficient skills.

It is of the utmost importance for a clinician to integrate new information and develop communication skills. Integrating information technology into the curriculum is essential and poses unique challenges in dental education. Different learning scenarios require

different tools.

Mutual recognition of qualifications by institutions and countries across the world demands that all must strive for excellence. To win international recognition of our qualifications, it is important to break cross-country barriers by developing a framework for a curriculum of the highest standards. It is said that assessment drives education, but our assessment systems and examinations are antiquated and serve only to stunt the learning process of the students and future practitioners. The education process should lay emphasis on integrated dentistry and patient needs; treatment options should be current and relevant. Critical thinking and empathizing with the patient should become a way of life for all dental surgeons and prosthodontists. It is high time that we come out of the mind-set of assessments based on end-of-the-year examinations and fixed requirements.

'Change is the only thing constant in life.' There has been a sea change not only in the science of dentistry and the biomaterials available, but also in patient needs and demands. It is about time that we adapt to these changes and take steps to revamp our system for the better.

Dr. (Mrs) S. J. Nagda

Editor,

The Journal of Indian Prosthodontic Society,
Prof. and Head, Dept. of Prosthodontics,
Nair Hospital Dental College, Mumbai - 400 008, India.
E-mail: jipseditor@yahoo.co.in