

Penyampai : DATIN SERI DR. SITI HASMAH BINTI HAJI MOHD. ALI
Tajuk : PERASMIAN PELANCARAN PERSATUAN PENDIDIKAN SAINS PERUBATAN DAN KESIHATAN
Lokasi : FAKULTI PERUBATAN, U.K.M JLN RAJA MUDA, KL
Tarikh : 31-03-1984

Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Saya ingin mengucapkan terima kasih atas jemputan yang diberi kepada saya untuk merasmikan pelancaran Persatuan Pendidikan Sains Perubatan dan Kesihatan pada hari ini.

Majlis ini juga memberi peluang kepada saya mengulangi pengalaman dan pendirian saya mengenai perkhidmatan kesihatan dan kepentingan pendidikan kesihatan untuk segenap lapisan kakitangan dalam mewujudkan "team work", perubahan sikap dan penerimaan perkhidmatan yang disediakan oleh kerajaan oleh rakyat dan kakitangan sendiri. Oleh demikian, saya sanjung tinggi kehormatan yang diberikan kepada saya hari ini.

2. I wish to express my thanks to the Organizing Committee for inviting me to officiate this ceremony. This Association is formed at a time when the health care system is facing a big challenge in having to achieve the target of health for all by the year 2000. Hence educational institutions should also step up their efforts in producing sufficient and appropriate numbers of health workers to meet this objective. This brings to mind many issues which we should all consider together.

3. The quality of the health care delivery system is dependent on many factors, chief of which are resource allocations, planning development and administrative machinery and the education or training of manpower, all of which play a complementary role to each other. While proper planning and development plans are important for provision of a comprehensive health care system, we must not forget however, that proper and adequate training of health manpower is an important determinant to the quality of health care to be provided. There is sufficient evidence of direct correlation between standards of medical care and health personnel education. By health personnel education, I mean the training of all categories of health workers from nurses, health inspectors, laboratory technologists, radiographers, physiotherapists, midwives, to doctors and specialists in the various disciplines.

4. I understand that the training of some categories of health personnel is undertaken by the Ministry of Health and others by the Ministry of Education. This in itself calls for a meeting of the 'minds' so that all training institutions will gear their training programmes, and will be guided by national health policies in order to meet national health priorities and needs.

5. While promoting secondary and tertiary health care, the Ministry of Health places emphasis on primary health care.

The Alma Ata declaration of September 1978, morally committed participating nations including Malaysia to the provision of optimal health care for all by year 2000, through primary health care. As the majority of our people live in the rural areas, we must ensure that health programmes and training of our health personnel are geared towards benefitting the majority of the target population ie. mainly those in remote, rural and underprivileged areas.

As we are fully aware, there is a reluctance among health workers to serve in the rural areas. Many factors of course contribute to this. But educational institutions must take it as a challenge to produce manpower who will be motivated to work in areas that really need them.

6. One way of doing this is to look again seriously at the curriculum, the way we teach and the way the students are learning. Our medical schools and most nursing schools for instance are hospital-based. The effect of hospital-based education is that patient care is always seen as that of a horizontal patient in bed, separated from his family and home. The student is thus seeing secondary and tertiary care and not primary care. The patient care undertaken is for diagnosis with procedural intervention for episodes of

acute illnesses. Students do not see that a child with gastroenteritis needs assistance in terms of long term or continuity of care and intervention since this condition stems from a host of interrelated factors in the family and surrounding environment and is dependant on personal, food and environmental hygiene, safe water supply, sanitary toilets etc.

7. Another effect of training our health workers, especially doctors, mainly in a tertiary hospital is that they see only exotic cases referred to such hospitals. This is further aggravated in teaching hospitals where there is a proliferation of specialties and sub-specialties. Students may be crammed with knowledge or skills that should rightfully be learnt at postgraduate level. Hence students tend to admire high status hospital specialists more than those involved in preventive or community medicine or those dealing with primary care for the community at large.

8. In teaching students to deal with individual patients we may overlook the fact that we should also expose them to the upsurging social problems of society which have a health component, such as drug addiction, smoking, alcoholism, behavioural problems of youth; those leading to road traffic accidents and problems of rural-urban migration. I urge that schools review their methods of teaching towards one which is practical and task oriented, problem based and geared towards meeting community needs and problems.

Serious thought should be given to the development of skills in a setting similar to that in which the skills are needed and will be applied. This implies a change from the conventional system of medical training to the development of a system based on learning from and within the community.

9. Training schools should not only set up "teaching clinics" in the community but should also provide basic health care for the communities they serve. Hence students will have a rich learning experience from the various settings, ranging from land schemes, remote rural villages, urban slums, estates, fishing villages, long houses and orang Asli settlements to name a few. These community clinics can be linked to hospitals for consultation with hospital-based physicians. In this way the health care system as providers of health care will have closer rapport with and will merge with the educational institutions in educating both the health workers in practice and those entering the practice.

10. Hospital-based teachers should provide community care especially in the rural areas. This role example is one of the ways of attracting more young doctors to serve in rural areas. Students will also be more motivated to practise in a familiar setting in which they were trained. They will also be able to understand at first hand, the needs of the community. One cannot appreciate the problems of the rural community unless one wades knee-deep in the mud to reach their homes, or sees malnourished children suffering from Protein-Energy Malnutrition in a surrounding abundant with rice, fish, local vegetables and fruits. Hence orientating students to socio cultural practices, prejudices and food taboos are equally as important as diagnosis of diseases.

11. I note that one of the objectives of this association is to foster closer relationship amongst teachers in the medical and health sciences. Teamwork is necessary across many levels, and between many people and groups, in order to ensure optimal use of available resources. If we are to achieve health for all by year 2000 through primary health care, it is essential that health personnel learn to work together and appreciate the spirit of teamwork. We may not necessarily work as a formal "team" but the concept of teamwork must be practiced because primary health care evolves from multisectorial, intersectorial, multi-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary community development approaches. Health workers have to collaborate not only with each other but also with personnel from other sectors and agencies like education, social welfare, agriculture, housing, industry, voluntary groups and organizations and of course, the community itself.

12. The setting up of this association marks the first milestone in the direction of collaboration and teamwork.

Development of such skills in teamwork should be emphasized and taught to students to enable them to understand interpersonal skills and planning. Students from many fields (medical students, student

nurses, student health inspectors, student midwives and so on) can share a community based experience. This would necessarily require tremendous efforts in planning, collaboration and coordination for successful implementation. To begin with, teachers should get together to plan and promote a programme for teamwork, so that students could use this experience as a learning exercise. There are also many examples of programmes in which students from different disciplines have joint training, particularly in field situations. We should study these programmes and adapt them to our local situation and needs.

13. I also note that the other objective of the Association is to promote the advancement of education of teachers of health personnel. Teachers need to advance themselves in their professional disciplines (nursing, radiography, laboratory technology and the allied medical specialities).

There is also a need to upgrade the training of para-medicals to a tertiary level. Academic training alone is not enough as trainers of health personnel. You must also be committed to education. There are many teaching skills that teachers must possess in order that students may learn effectively. I note that one of your conference topics is on "Learning Approaches"; indeed we must be aware that teaching is not equal to learning. We assume students must have learnt if we had taught them. Teachers of health personnel are given training in their professional disciplines but they are given very little training on how to be effective teachers. We usually teach in the manner we were taught as students and more often than not, we were not taught in the most effective way. I believe this Association can play a role in assisting teachers to gain insight into their expected performance. In this aspect I would like you to consider that in teaching, you not only impart knowledge and develop psychomotor skills in your students but you should also inculcate attitudes and work ethics acceptable and appropriate for our culture.

14. Complaints from "consumers" usually centre around "attitudes" of health workers. Dedication, motivation, interest and initiative stem from attitudes. No matter how knowledgeable and skilled your students are, if their interpersonal skills and human relationship are limited and they behave arrogantly towards colleagues and patients, then probably you have failed in some aspects of your role as teachers and guides.

15. Last but not least, I would like to urge an emphasis on educational research and evaluation. Evaluation can be at many levels; national, institutional, departmental and even at the individual level. We evaluate students all the time but do we ever evaluate ourselves? Conservatism is inherent in most forms of training programmes and is difficult to overcome. However, if staff are encouraged to recognize the existence of their deficiencies in their own and each others teaching, and to see it as an important part of their obligation to their community they may accept change more readily. Evaluation will also contribute to new ideas and innovation. At the moment teachers are not required to be accountable for the courses they teach i.e. to be responsible for ensuring that the courses achieve the desired objectives at minimum cost. As responsible citizens and teachers we must ensure that we have given our best in spite of existing resource constraints in order to produce a cadre of dedicated and sincere health workers.

16. I wish to congratulate the founders of this Association for their foresight in establishing an Association that will greatly assist the Country in achieving better health care service for the people by year 2000. I wish them success in its endeavours.

17. Dengan harapan ini, saya dengan sukacita merasmikan pelancaran Persatuan Pendidikan Sains Perubatan dan Kesihatan Malaysia.

Sekian, terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.