

Letters to the Editor

[The Editor is not responsible for the views expressed by the correspondents]

Urgent Need for Dedicated Clinical Pharmacology Departments and to Address Faculty Shortage in West Bengal

SIR, — We are writing to highlight an urgent issue regarding the current state of clinical pharmacology education in West Bengal. Despite the introduction of DM clinical pharmacology courses at School of Tropical Medicine in 2011 and at R G Kar Medical College in 2023, there is a critical shortage of qualified faculty (with DM clinical pharmacology degree) in the two institutions, as a recent survey reveals. This shortage threatens the quality of education and training of DM students on one hand, and missed the opportunity to optimise patient care in terms of rational medication management on the other, leave alone losing sight the huge potential of utilising this unique subdiscipline (of clinical pharmacology) in shaping drugs and clinical research ecosystem in the state.

The survey finds that currently both at School of Tropical Medicine and at R G Kar Medical College there is only one trained faculty each (with DM degree) which is grossly inadequate in handling the curricular training as per the prescribed norms of National Medical Commission¹. This precarious state continues while trained faculty (with DM clinical pharmacology degree) with different designations (four professors, three associate professors, one assistant professor) are available in permanent positions in the medical education service (MES) at different medical colleges in the state. Their expert services remain unutilized. We even see illogical transfer of trained faculty from these DM clinical pharmacology training departments without suitable replacement². Thus we witness a colossal waste of useful resources and a blatant demonstration of lack of planning and vision, on the part of the authority concerned.

Clinical pharmacologists in India are highly trained professionals who play a vital role in drug development, drugs and clinical research, medication management and patient safety, and rational use of medicines. They are crucial in optimizing patient care and minimizing medication errors. In optimizing patient care, the implementation of a clinical pharmacological reconciliation, review, and feedback intervention bundle (CPRRF) is proposed. This bundle includes strategies such as evaluating prescribed medicines for redundancy and (un)safety, deprescribing unnecessary and potentially harmful medicines, preventing and managing adverse drug reactions, and improving treatment adherence. These strategies are essential in continuously calibrating the risk-benefit balance for individual patients³.

It is extremely unfortunate that despite the availability of expert professionals in the MES, dedicated clinical pharmacology departments are yet not established in West Bengal. This contrasts with institutions such as The Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER) Puducherry, Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College (GSMC) and the King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital Mumbai, and Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences Hyderabad, where dedicated departments are in charge of imparting postdoctoral training, serving patients, and fostering research.

In fine, we draw the attention of the relevant authority in the health department of West Bengal to this matter and plead for urgent redressal to the issue highlighted, in the best interest of the society and science.

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Solve the Mystery of Biochemistry in Every Square

SIR, — Biochemistry, being a subject bridging the basic medical sciences and clinical practice, requires a strong foundation of knowledge. But many students see it as feats of memorization rather than understanding because it involves study of various biomolecules, memorization of their metabolic pathways and so students often consider Biochemistry as a difficult subject.

Didactic lectures are one of the most common method of teaching used in medical curriculum, making students passive listeners. Hence there is a need to develop and adopt some modern pedagogic methodologies in Medical Education to supplement conventional lecture teaching. The use of active learning strategies is recognized as good practice in undergraduate education and is now a widely accepted tool for information delivery and retention¹.

Keeping this in mind, on the occasion of birth anniversary of the father of modern biochemistry "Carl Alexander Newberg", we, the teachers of Biochemistry department had conducted Biochemistry Fun Day, "Let's Decode Biochemistry" for first professional MBBS students. Various activities were conducted on this day like Role play illustrating the importance of biochemical investigations in diagnosing the common clinical conditions like Jaundice and Acute myocardial infarction, Flameless cooking for understanding the importance of nutrition in biochemistry, treasure hunt where the treasures were various diseases and students hunted them using various clues etc.

Crossword Puzzle was one of the interesting activities

conducted on this day. In Biochemistry, games like crossword puzzles can be used as it brings interest and is a welcome variation in the repetitive routine lectures. So an innovative crossword puzzle was constructed on various important topics like nutrition, biochemical tests for diagnosis of various disorders, diagnosis of various disorders from the given biochemical laboratory reports, identification of techniques used for performing biochemical investigations. The crossword was created with clues given across and down, using crossword maker website. Hints were provided for each question in the form of pictures that relate to the correct answer. The students participated in the activity with great zeal and enthusiasm. Majority of the students were able to solve the entire crossword puzzle within the stipulated time and first three students who were able to solve the puzzle in minimum time were given rewards. Most of the students agreed that the use of the crossword was fun and an innovative method of teaching and learning.

With regard to teaching biochemistry to medical students at the undergraduate level, many new terms and concepts are introduced in a short time frame. The crossword puzzles provide an opportunity to recall essential concepts and build critical thinking². The crossword puzzles provide students a unique, innovative and fun filled opportunity to evaluate their own level of learning by identifying concepts that have not been mastered³⁻⁵. The student's inability to

answer a question help them to identify areas of concern or weakness that can be corrected by targeted studying.

Active learning tools like crossword puzzle can be used as a complementary aid to traditional teaching for undergraduate medical students to learn biochemistry.

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LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT OF JIMA

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The National Medical Commission (NMC) guidelines for medical faculty in India requires publications of meta-analysis, systematic reviews, original articles, or case series in journals indexed in **Medline, PubMed Central, Citation index, Sciences Citation Index Expanded (SCIE), Embase, Scopus, or Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)**.

Journal of the Indian Medical Association (JIMA) is already indexed in **SCOPUS** since 2020.

Once again, we are successful to index JIMA in yet another indexing in **EMBASE** in 2024 with retrospective effect (Serial No. 5532 in the Embase Jan 2024 Journal List).

Work is going on for PUBMED CENTRAL indexing in full swing.

We are really grateful to **Dr. R. V. Asokan**, our beloved National President and **Dr. Anilkumar J. Nayek**, our Hon. Secretary General for round the year support to JIMA Committee.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the JIMA Committee members, the Reviewers and Staffs of JIMA for this historical achievement of JIMA.

Dr. Sanjoy Banerjee
Hony. Editor, JIMA

Listed in Embase at serial No. **5532**

	A	B	C	D
1	Embase journal titles (Jan 2024)	Abbreviated title	ISSN	EISSN
5526	Journal of the History of Ideas	J. Hist. Ideas	00225037	10863222
5527	Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences	J. Hist. Med. Allied Sci.	00225045	14684373
5528	Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences	J. Hist. Behav. Sci.	00225061	15206696
5529	Journal of the History of the Neurosciences	J. Hist. Neurosci.	0964704X	17445213
5530	Journal of the Hong Kong College of Cardiology	J. Hong Kong Coll. Cardiol.	10277811	
5531	Journal of the Indian Chemical Society	J. Indian Chem. Soc.	00194522	
5532	Journal of the Indian Medical Association	J. Indian Med. Assoc.	00195847	
5533	Journal of the Intensive Care Society	J. Intensive Care Soc.	17511437	
5534	Journal of the International AIDS Society	J. Int. AIDS Soc.		17582652
5535	Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS	J. Int. Assoc. Providers AIDS Care	23259574	23259582