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Al-Azhar Experience: (Innovation in Undergraduate Medical Education Program)

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Al-Azhar Experience: Innovation in Undergraduate Medical Education Program.

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EDITORIAL REPORT

Background: Integration in medical curricula is a newly growing governmentally approved trend in Egypt by the end of 2017 and has been implemented in medical schools all over Egypt by the beginning of the academic year 2018/2019, where Al-Azhar Faculties of Medicine are adopted the new integrated program using different teaching & learning strategies.
Work & Results: Curriculum (Basic and Clinical phases) was outlined in terms of map, content areas, competencies & key competencies fulfilling the National Academic Reference standards (NARS) 2017 **.**
The integrated program consists of two phases fulfilling the fifth level in Harden's Integration ladder; Phase I: Basic Science phase for two years, beginning with introductory team based term to be followed by system based for three and half terms, where problem based learning is adopted**.**
Eighteen horizontal and vertical integrated conventional & system-based modules (basic 80% / clinical 20%) were developed within this phase, while Twenty four horizontal and vertical integrated case based modules were designed (clinical 90% / basic 10% sciences) modules were developed in phase II for five and half terms. In addition, innovative eight professional and ten elective themes were integrated longitudinally and a project is included before graduation. Nine Islamic studies were also included as University requirements **.**
In phase I modules, 15 disciplines were integrated including Fundamental Structure (Anatomy & Histology), Development (Embryology), Essential Function (Physiology), Biochemical Basis (Biochemistry & Genetic), Disease Grounds (Microbiology, Parasitology & Immunology), Disease Process (Pathology), Medical Ethics & Professionalism (Soft skills, Risk Management and Patient Safety), Public Health (Epidemiology) (Research Methodology & Biostatistics), (Behavioral &Social sciences) Language (Medical Terminology & Glossary), Disease Presentation (Introduction to Clinical Skills) and Treatment Concepts (Pharmacology**.(**
In phase II modules, 18 clinical disciplines were integrated. These disciplines are Medico-legal Sciences (Principles of Forensic Medicine &Toxicology), Community &Occupational Medicine, Diagnostic Tools (Diagnostic Radiology & Laboratory Medicine) , Ophthalmology, (ear, Nose &throat) , (Dermatology, Andrology & Venereal diseases) , (Gynecology &women Health), Obstetrics, Psychiatry, (Emergency Medicine &Intensive Care),(Perioperative Management, Pain therapy &Palliative Care) ,(Family Medicine &Geriatrics), (Pediatrics &Child Health), Internal Medicine , General Surgery ,Stepping up higher level in Harden's ladder is achieved in six modules that showed integration between Medicine, Pediatrics and surgery like Endocrinology, Nephrology &Urology, GIT, Chest, Cardiology & Cardiothoracic Surgery , Neurology &Neurosurgery, Orthopedic surgery, Rheumatology & Rehabilitation . as well as Research project.
Conclusion: The experience of integration between basic and clinical sciences with inclusion of professionalism and elective courses can be seen as a new innovative and applicable approach that will fit our students for practice of medicine and be an effective members of the profession.
Take-home message: The newly developed integrated medical program at Al-Azhar University, Faculties of Medicine is primarily promoted to act as a role model for integration.

Keywords: *Curriculum, Integration; Planning, Basic medical sciences; Clinical medical sciences; Undergraduate medical education; Professionalism; Elective Courses.*

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