Development of New Methods of Instruction and Learning in Medical and Nursing Education

This special issue deals with the report of studies on “Development of New Methods of Instruction and Learning in Medical and Nursing Education,” which have been conducted by a group of medical and nursing educators (represented by Dr. D. Ushiba) with a support of the Cooperative Research Grant from the Ministry of Education. The grant was awarded in 1976 following the past three successive years when similar grants were given for the studies on medical education with special reference to the reconstruction of undergraduate medical education and its curriculum planning.

The research group was divided into the two large subgroups, medical and nursing; each of them being again divided into smaller groups according to particular topics of study. Studies were conducted separately on each topic as well as jointly with the whole members under a general objective to develop teaching methods to be most suitable in approaching the curricular objectives which had been set up by the former research group in the previous year.

In the medical subgroup, the general instructive objective of the first and second basic science systems and the integration of courses in various directions were discussed. Dr. E. Majima has defined the first basic science system as anatomy, histology, embriology, physiology and biochemistry. The general instructive objective of this group of disciplines was set up, but some difficulties were encountered to have integrated curricula among them. The second basic science system which corresponds to “clinical basic medicine,” contains pathology, microbiology, parasitology and pharmacology, and its general instructive objective has been set up by Dr. A. Ojima.

The merit and demerit of the curricular integration were extensively discussed by Dr. Y. Nakagawa who classified the way of integration into four categories; organ- or system-oriented, disease-oriented, symptom or sign-oriented, and problem-oriented. He surveyed the present trend of the curricular integration in the United States by referring to the AAMC Curriculum Directory 1974/75, the result of which was summarized in a table. The situation of the curricular integration in Japanese medical schools was also described.

In the medical subgroup study, two topics were chosen; “clinic” (lecture with case presentation) and “clerkship” (bed-side learning). Discussions on the method of “clinic” were summarized by Dr. K. Nakayama, in which the importance of instructional planning including the general and specific objectives in each topic, the way of introduction, case presentation, conclusion and further or advanced discussions was particularly stressed.

The improvement of “clerkship” was discussed by another group of members, and representative plans of one-year and two-year schedules, respectively, were presented by Dr. F. Takaku. Other proposals or programs for reformed clerkships were described by Drs. A. Yoshioka, T. Iwabuchi, F. Yamashita, K. Nakayama, S. Tanaka, and J. Suzuki. Also, a new program of bed-side learning being planned at the University of Tsukuba School of Medicine was introduced by Dr. M. Hori.

In the nursing subgroup, two studies were carried out under the supervision of Dr. S. Hinohara; “New curriculum designs and trends in teaching-and-learning and evaluation methods,” and “A trial of introducing simulated patients into the general part of nursing curriculum.” Prof. Junko Kondo of St. Luke University and Prof. Tomoko Fujieda of Tokyo Women’s Medical College summarized and discussed the results of the two studies, respectively.

Dr. Ushiba commented that this type of cooperative research should be continued in the future for studying the accountability and the method of feedback of evaluation in medical and nursing education.

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