

## Recent Innovations in Health Profession Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia The experience of King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences

**Youssef Al Eissa**

College of Medicine, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, National Guard Health Affairs, Riyadh.

Health Professions Education in Saudi Arabia is following traditional approaches with few exceptions. On the other hand the percentage of Saudi National who are working in the health of the total health manpower. Furthermore there is lack of proper co-ordination between the health system and health professional education institutions

Responding to these challenges the National Guard Health Affairs (NGHA) has established the largest residency training program in addition to a well-established Postgraduate Training Centre providing all kinds of courses to health professionals. NGHA realized the need for graduating high quality nurses and physicians to contribute to the reduction of the severe national shortage of those specialties in the Kingdom. College of Medicine and Nursing are recently established and stepping forward to realize their objectives. The University of King Saud bin Abdulaziz for Health Sciences is established to consolidate and expand on these activities and successful experience. The main unique features of this University include but are not limited to the following:

1. The University opted for adopting innovative teaching and learning methods including Problem Based Learning (PBL) which is evidence-based, community-oriented, and responsive to the health priorities of the Kingdom.
2. Appropriate student selection is considered of utmost importance for realizing University objectives. Therefore, for the first time in the Kingdom, the college of Medicine selected graduate students from any field related to medicine to join a four-year medical program.
3. The third innovation is that the University is existing within a high volume medical service and highly reputed institution. This allows full partnership between medical education and health services, which constitutes one of the main and unique features of this University. Partnership reverberates through all stages of the curriculum, starting from planning, through implementation, up to evaluation.
4. The University, through its Colleges, has recruited eminent medical educators who have provided educational services including curriculum development, student assessment, program evaluation, and faculty development, in addition to the establishment of the first Saudi Masters Degree Program of Medical Education.
5. The University opted for maximal utilization of High Education Technology in its educational

delivery, including full web-based curricula such as in the Medical College and the Masters of Medical Education.

6. High quality and relevant research is promoted through the university Research Center, which is expected to conduct clinical and health-systems research that address the Kingdom's priority health problem.

The further plans of the University are to cover all health professional fields including Dentistry, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, along the lines of its current innovative approaches.

**Conclusion:** The University adopted many innovative strategies since its inception: including, PBL, utilization of latest educational Information technology, and partnership between different health services and medical education, all of which are expected to qualify it to take a leading national and international role.