

Volume 6, No. 1 (Supplement)

June 2011

ISSN 1823-2140

The
National University
with an
INTERNATIONAL REACH



UNIVERSITI
KEBANGSAAN
MALAYSIA
National University of Malaysia

MEDICINE & Health

The Official Journal of The Faculty of Medicine UKM

7th Malaysia Indonesia Brunei Medical Sciences Conference "TOWARDS A HOLISTIC AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACH IN HEALTHCARE"



22nd - 24th July 2011

Equatorial Hotel, Bangi, Selangor,
MALAYSIA

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PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PPD) IN THE MEDICAL CURRICULUM: NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

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Professional development is one of the important core competencies of medical graduates. Professionalism at all level of medical training is emphasized in guidelines for medical schools all over the world. Many reports indicate a direct correlation between physicians with disciplinary issues and presence of unprofessional behaviours during medical school. Formalization of a personal and professional development module for medical students could be regarded as a strategic step towards addressing the concern. The main challenge is to make the implicit explicit and to bring the 'hidden curriculum' out to be assessed objectively. Such efforts could be daunting and require great leadership commitment and consistency. PPD is best delivered through role-modeling, hence the other challenge is to train medical educators to inculcate high standard of professionalism within them. Assessment of professionalism is another important issue to consider. Finding the right measurement tools that could gauge the level of PPD of the medical students is another challenge. Continuous feedback and mentoring is essential and critical in supporting the development of professionalism, which is a life-long commitment.