

Infrastructure or Internal Design?

We used to know a friend who had his medical training in Western Europe. He once told us that, soon after settling back home in Egypt; he was very enthusiastic about promoting for the ideas of evidence-based medicine and clinical governance or risk management among his fellows and colleagues.

Then, he quickly was faced with the fact that there would be no point in talking about guidelines, auditing, risk management, patient advocacy or even scientific research until one can develop the appropriate system or environment which can adopt those ideas.

This friend gave us the simplest but most comprehensive example to describe the situation in the medical systems of most developing countries. “Only a dreamer would reform the internal design and decoration of his home without first treating chronic problems in the infrastructure of electricity, aeration, and buildings’ foundations”, he said.

We believe that the mentality of health care professionals is the “*infrastructure*” and “*beams*” of a sound medical system.

This is the most difficult and time-consuming prerequisite one has to start with on the long road of reforming a national health service. Yet, educating people is the most rewarding national investment any country can plan.

Without well educated, motivated and scientific personnel, no guidelines will be truly followed and no advanced technology will be properly used or maintained. Millions will be wasted on decorating a building the infrastructure of which needs serious inspection!

We do not mean that our health care professionals lack motivation or capabilities; all we call for is to invite all those who care after the welfare of our beloved country to focus on undergraduate education and postgraduate continuous professional development, on a strong basis of teamwork, evidence-based practice and strict clinical governance.

We call on all those who care to reconsider the defects in our administrative structure, our health insurance system and our national policy of medical employment laws of appraisal and revalidation.

We received with great enthusiasm the news about the new residency program in Ain Shams University Maternity Hospital. We consider this long awaited step a turn point in the professional development program pioneered in Egypt by Ain Shams professors. This program reinforces our deep belief in the urgent need to inspect the infrastructure of our medical training system before proceeding with the internal design of our practice.

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