



Medicon 2010: The Missing Domain

Devika Prasanna¹, Akshay Sharma²

1. Intern, PSGIMS&R, Coimbatore and Governing Council Member of INFORMER

2. Intern, Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore and President INFORMER



Medicon 2010

Third International Medical Students' Research Conference of The Forum for Medical Students' Research (India),
INFORMER

Coimbatore, India, 9-12 June 2010

CONFERENCE REPORT

Please cite this paper as: Prasanna D, Sharma A.
Medicon 2010: The Missing Domain. AMJ, 2010,
3, 8, 504-506. Doi 10.4066/AMJ.2010.421

Corresponding Author:

Dr Devika Prasanna
Intern
PSG IMS & R
Peelamedu, Coimbatore 641004
Tamil Nadu

Email: devika@informer.org.in

Medicine is believed to be held on three prongs, knowledge, skill and attitude. In the current scenario, a major part of the didactic teaching in an Indian medical school just concentrates on imparting knowledge. One year of internship

after completing the medical school helps impart the basic clinical training which deals with the skills. But the entire domain of attitude gets overlooked. This “missing domain” essentially refers to all that which is “untaught and un-thought” in routine medical education but is quintessential for the practice in itself. This year, through Medicon, an attempt was made to address such oft neglected issues.

Medicon, an International Undergraduate Medical Students' Research Conference, was initiated by Dr M G Deo, Secretary of the Moving Academy of Medicine and Biomedicine, Pune, in 2007. It was started with the sole purpose of providing a platform for recognition of undergraduate research. It was here at this conglomeration in 2008 that the Indian Forum for Medical Students' Research (INFORMER) took birth. Under the banner of INFORMER, medical students themselves took lead in



organizing this event, with Medicon 2009, held at Mangalore hosted by Kasturba Medical College Mangalore. Medicon 2010 was held at Coimbatore organized by the students of PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research between 9 and 12 June 2010.

The conference was preceded by a day of workshops on the following themes:

1. Leadership and communication skills
2. Molecular genetics – hands on approach
3. Evidence based medicine
4. Medical writing

Each of the workshops had been designed in a way that knowledge was transferred in place of information. The most appreciated workshop was that on leadership and communication skills.

Over 300 student delegates from all over India and abroad attended the conference. The proceedings of the conference began with the inaugural lecture by Dr Vinay Kumar (of Robbins Pathology fame). His inspiring talk, with direct references to his personal life, held the young minds in awe of the potential the field of research has to offer.

Medicon has always been about “observing beyond vision” and doing that, which has not been ventured into. This essence was highlighted upon by our Chief Guest, Dr M G Deo, in his address to the students. Along with him, the Guest of Honor, Dr Roli Mathur (In Charge of Short Term Studentship Program, Indian Council of Medical Research) gave the delegates a bird’s eye view of research in India, currently and in the future. These thought

provoking ideas set the tone for the activities spread over the next three days.

About 200 papers were chosen for presentation after a long and deliberate screening process which took place in January - March 2010. The selected papers were further divided into ten basic categories, in correlation with the undergraduate subjects, for ease of assessment.

The conference was unique in being the first of its kind to hold a panel discussion, with the students being active panelists. The topic of debate was “We teach, do you learn?” This panel gave the students an opportunity to directly question the administrators about current medical curriculum and its relevance. It also provided a platform for the students to convey their needs and expectations, directly to the people in power, who could actually help them bring about the desired changes.

A general body meeting of INFORMER, was also held in which the students debated enthusiastically about their ideas and progress of medical research. Their vision of improving standards of undergraduate research activities in order to bring about the long awaited “change” was a breath of fresh air.

The conference also saw other eminent speakers. Dr Binayak Sen (Social Activist and Paediatrician at Christian Medical College, Vellore) spoke about his experience working with the tribals. Dr Anantbhan spoke about ethics in research and why young researchers need to be careful about these. Dr Priti Rajan shared advances in gene therapy and stem cells. Dr Kezevino Aram shared her experiences at the Shanti Ashram, an organization where she has been practicing preventive pediatric



interventions in a rural setting. While Dr M B Pranesh spoke on the history of medicine Dr C R Srinivasan shared his ideas how undergraduate medical students could get more from research. Members of the International Nobel Peace prize winning Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders- Ms Farhat Mantoo and Dr Shobha Varthaman spoke about the scope and opportunities available with MSF for doctors.

Medicon did not only mean 'all work and no play'. On the social front, a classical dance show organized by PSG Institute of Management. The students also participated in the Clinico Pathological Case Competition, which involved an online screening that took place in the month of May. A quiz competition was also organized, covering the various basic modalities of medicine and also a few specialties. To understand the students' perspective, a short film competition was also held, with the theme being "Missing Domain". Prizes were awarded for the top 3 films and also to the best presentations in the platform and poster sections under each of the 10 subjects.

And before any of us, could realize it, the vote of thanks was being proposed. Medicon 2010 was coming to an end with lots of new developments and changes. And more than anything else, lots of new minds ignited and inspired.

Medicon 2009 took us "from bench to bedside" and Medicon 2010 attempted to fill in the gaps met with on that way- attitude, research, scientific spirit and all that which has remained untaught and un-thought of!

PEER REVIEW

Not commissioned, not externally peer reviewed.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Both the authors are Governing Council Members of the forum (INFORMER) that organized Medicon. Both were involved in the organization of this event.