

The Essence of Medical Education

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William Osler noted a century ago, at Oxford, that the doctors are expected “to acquire facility in the art of diagnosis, which must everywhere precede the rational treatment of disease . . . to grow in clinical judgment . . . [appreciating] the relative value of symptoms and the physical signs, and . . . [in giving] a forecast or prognosis . . . to conduct the treatment so that the patient may be restored to health. . . or, failing that, be given the greatest possible measure of relief.”

A century later, expectations of doctors are more complex. General Medical Council (GMC) of United Kingdom outlined in 1993 these expectations in *Tomorrow's Doctors*: providing *good clinical care* (having sound standards and competencies); *maintaining good clinical practice* (keeping abreast of contemporary knowledge and skills); *developing relationships with patients* (getting on with them); *working with colleagues* (working effectively in a team); *teaching and training* (being a competent teacher); *probity* (having integrity); and finally, *health* (being healthy and not putting others at risk through health). Martin van Der Weyden, 2003

Categories of responsibilities required of doctors to sustain professionalism as outlined by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) are to 1. Maintain professional competence, 2. Be honest with patients, 3. Respect patient confidentiality, 4. Avoid inappropriate relations with patients, 5. Advance scientific knowledge, 6. Fulfill the obligations imposed by membership in the profession, 7. Improve quality of care, 8. Improve access to care, 9. Promote the just distribution of resources, 10. Maintain trust by managing conflicts of interest.

Do the expectations and requirements for our doctors in Taiwan differ significantly from those demanded of doctors elsewhere? How do we set our standards compared to those set forth by others? What is our aspiration and what is our reality? How do we improve the education of our medical students so that they leave medical schools holding the right attitude and having competencies of a professional, possessing good judgment and values, behaving ethically and with dignity and, lastly and most importantly, capable of enjoying and sustaining a life-long practice of good medicine?