

Encouragement Of Learning Legal Medicine.

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Abstract

Dear Editor

The strong association between dissection and medical practice was possibly first made during the Renaissance when, despite fierce resistance from the Church, man first began systematically to dissect the cadaver in his relentless exploration of the mysteries of the body. Today, however, there are those who argue that such dissection, as the basis of modern scientific method, hold the key to man's dehumanization. (1)

The new Recommendation on the Training of Specialists produced by the Education Committee of the General Medical Council (GMC) does not address the details of specialist training itself. (2)

Anatomy is first learned as part of medical science, and, in the process, contributes to self-directed learned and problem-solving skills. It is the responsibility of our undergraduate teachers to educate doctors to begin to practice medicine to high standards. It is to this end that the medical register exists. The 1987 GMC Recommendations concerning subsequent postgraduate training identify a round dozen of attributes of which only one relates to specific special competencies. A knowledge of regional anatomy and morbid anatomy assumes a central significance in such specialist training.

Emergency physicians today invade the body dramatically

with their new techniques, and have clearly always needed broad expert knowledge of structure as well as function. In legal medicine, we can learn the physical examination along the base of the trauma guideline and the procedure of the pericardial puncture.

The medical curriculum, especially at undergraduate level and specifically in basic medical science teaching, where it can be in the hands of non-clinical personnel, is a non-elective course unit degree or intermediate degree, and is potentially remarkably fragmented. There is the risk that the undergraduate medical student will study very little in depth.

We should note that, in some medical schools around the world with innovative curricula, an attempt had been made to do away with dissection in anatomy. In several cases, however, these schools have backtracked because of the unease and lack of confidence in dealing with the gross anatomy of the body that their graduates have expressed. There are new approaches today in the teaching of legal medicine which may greatly assist us in medical examinations.

References

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