

WHY MORE MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES IN PUBLIC SECTOR IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA?

Establishment of seats of higher learning to ensure quality is a natural evolutionary process in the development of society and fulfillment of the natural desire of progress of human race. The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has to be at par, in standards of medical education, with the rest of the country and with the rest of the world. A university, in general, has two functions. One is to develop human resource and the other is to create an environment for and to facilitate research (Fig. 1).

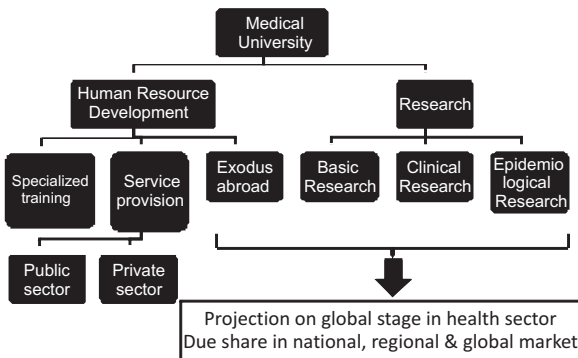


Fig. 1

Human resource development is essential to meet our current and future requirements. Graduates and post graduates leaving universities are either taken up by public or private sector locally for provision of services or they go abroad to seek employment or post graduation. This helps us get our due share in local, regional and international market. Thus universities create opportunities for socio-economic growth in addition to providing quality professionals for provision of quality health care services. It also projects us on a global stage. It is expected that quality medical professionals so produced would use appropriate knowledge and skill to save time, health and money by timely cost effective interventions. This would reduce cost of treatment, reduce hospitalized and convalescence period, morbidity and mortality. Thus medical universities would help national savings in both cash and kind.

Medical education is different than general education as it involves integration of teaching, training and service provision as a single package rather than separate independent components (Fig. 2).

It is also important to note that medical education is a continuous process (Fig. 3). Under graduate medical education provides the base, post graduation enhances the quality and continuous

Integration of Teaching, Training and provision

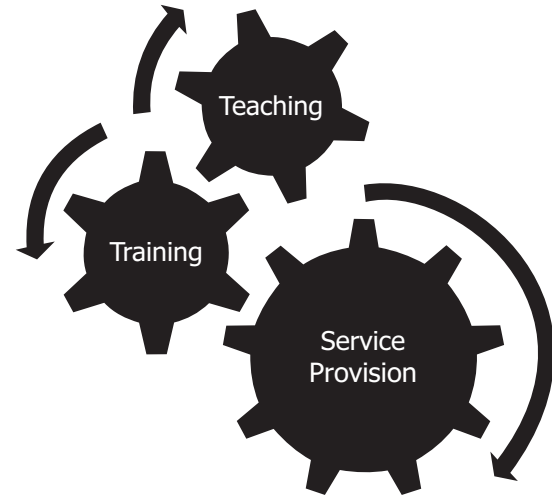


Fig. 2

Medical Education is a continuous spectrum

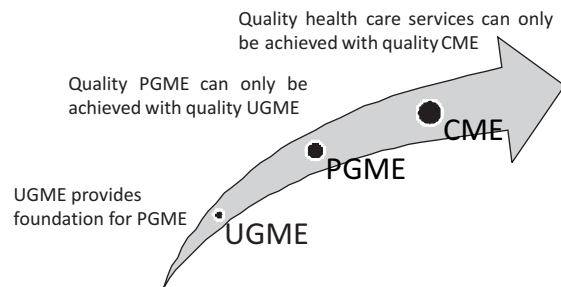


Fig. 3

medical education ensures the maintenance of the quality to meet the challenges of the time. Medical universities will ensure this continuum.

The concept of a medical university was first floated in Pakistan by Khyber Medical College (KMC). It was in 1989 when the then Prime Minister of Pakistan announced that Khyber Medical College would be elevated to the status of university. The Education Policy of Federal Government of Pakistan, 1998, decided to establish medical universities in the provinces of Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Since then (Fig. 4), Punjab has established 02 medical universities. Sindh has established 04 medical universities. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has established only 01 medical university. The irony is that the dream of elevating Khyber Medical College, Peshawar to the status of university is yet to be realized despite the fact that the idea of medical

BACKGROUND and PRECEDENCE

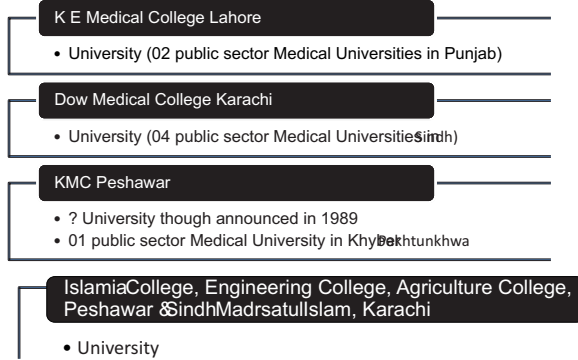


Fig. 4

KMC UNIVERSITY: FACULTIES AND ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

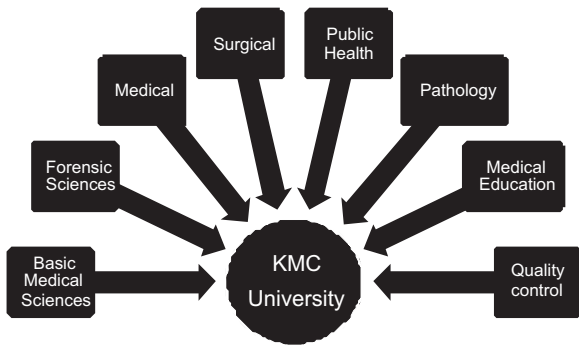


Fig. 5

KMC: Academic & Administration Autonomy

KMC is performing the function of a standard Medical university



Fig. 6

university was developed and nurtured by Khyber Medical College. It is also important to mention that almost all institutions of the same historic importance in the country and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been elevated to the status of the university. Why not KMC?

Pakhtunkhwa University of Allied Medical Sciences - Justification

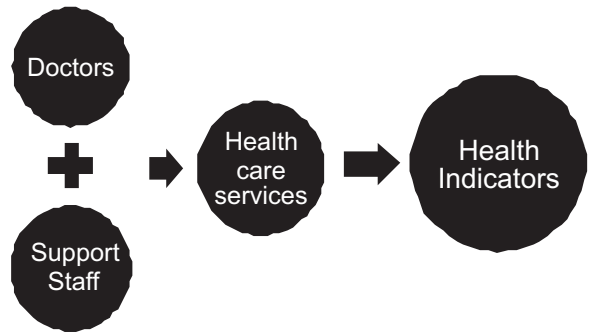


Fig. 7

KMC has got all the ingredients and capacity (infrastructure, equipment, faculty and capacity to generate financial resources) to become a university (fig. 5) at a minimal or negligible cost. It is performing all the functions of the university (Fig.6) within the existing budget but lacks the required autonomy.

Medical education involves training of doctors and support staff. The support staff includes Nurses, Paramedics, technicians, health related information technologists and epidemiologists etc. It is important to note that doctors alone without the support staff can not improve health indicators. Thus parity in both sets

University of Allied Medical Science

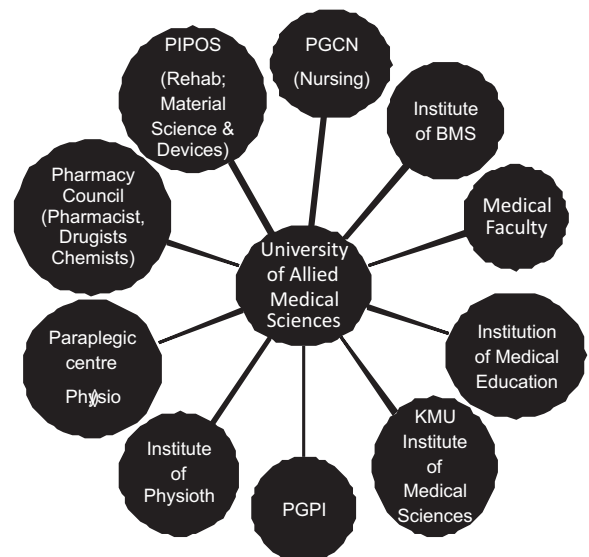


Fig. 8

of health professionals has to be maintained for provision of quality health care services to improve our health indicators (Fig. 7). Our statistics in this regard are very poor. For example we have 04 doctors per nurse while the ratio is reverse in the rest of the world.

It is suggested that we should have at least two medical universities. Khyber Medical College, Peshawar should be elevated to the status of university with the technical jurisdiction of training doctors and be named as Khyber Medical College University to correct the historic wrong done to the institution and to fulfill the promise of the highest office of the country i.e. Prime Minister. The existing medical university i.e. Khyber Medical University (KMU), should be called Pakhtunkhwa University of Allied Medical Sciences and shall have technical jurisdiction of training the Allied Medical Professionals including Nurses and Paramedics. In addition to its current assets, University of Allied Medical Sciences shall be given Paraplegic centre, Pakistan Institute of Prosthetic and Orthotic Sciences (PIPOS), Post Graduate Nursing School (PGCN), Pharmacy Council and Post Graduate Paramedic Institute (Fig. 8). This would strengthen its infrastructure and make it financially sustainable.

Financial viability is one of the important factors in decision making of this kind. Policy makers are deterred by the fact that none of the public sector universities are self sustainable and are totally dependent on grants from the Government. It is surprising to see that universities in private sector are

thriving and making money. Public sector universities have to revisit their strategy for generation of funds without compromising on the objectives of the Government to provide quality training at subsidized rates.

It is worth mentioning that universities never stop growing and are never complete. There is minimum standard to begin with but no limits for expansion. In Pakistan, 05 faculties are the minimum required for establishment of a university but there is no bar on opening new faculties over and above the minimum required. Thus this notion to strengthen and complete KMU first and then elevate KMC to the status of university is not right. Further we have to differentiate between mindless expansion and thoughtful progress. Expansion without looking at the financial liabilities has made KMU weak and vulnerable. It is this fragility of KMU that puts off policy makers.

The suggestion to have two medical universities with different technical jurisdiction is valid, financially viable and would enable us to meet local, regional and international needs in health care sector with minimal extra investment.

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