

DO WE NEED TO INCREASE THE PASSING PERCENTAGE OF MBBS STUDENTS IN PAKISTAN?

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The importance of medical personnel in healthcare settings cannot be understated. Therefore, the best caliber of patient care must be reflected in the knowledge, abilities, and standards set for medical education. By establishing higher benchmarks, we enable physicians to meet the demands of their work, ongoing advancement, and creative approaches to healthcare delivery. Higher standards improve the mentality of educators and legislators and result in better-prepared healthcare workers. Recently, the accrediting and regulating organizations in Pakistan are endeavoring to improve the quality of medical education at the basic and postgraduate levels. For this purpose, the 50% set standard marks attainment is being challenged to increase it to 60-70%. This might create unrest among the medical students. This discussion aims to highlight the pros and cons of enhancing the set standard/benchmark of 50% in both theory and practical summative assessments.

Due to the introduction of Artificial intelligence platforms, the easy availability of teaching and learning opportunities, quick access to assessment items and vulnerabilities of the institutional questions banks to students, there is a fear that the 50% benchmark of passing might result in the following:

1. **Diminished Credibility:** Stakeholders may begin to question the legitimacy of medical education if a large number of students are passing with minimal effort.
2. **Inflated sense of Achievement:** Students may feel that they have achieved something without having to put in much effort if passing the medical exam becomes so easy, which may discourage them from staying up to date on the most recent advancements in knowledge.
3. **Impact on Quality Care:** A low passing score may result in less than optimal patient care since inadequate knowledge may cause the patient to receive the wrong diagnosis and treatment, which would be harmful.
4. **International Recognition:** Medical degrees are accepted around the world under predetermined criteria. A low pass rate could compromise the legitimacy of medical degrees from specific universities, hence limiting graduates' options for work and international education.

Therefore, it is justified that the set standards of 50% passing among the medical schools should be revisited in consultation with all the stakeholders and to develop mechanisms to enhance it carefully with the following intent:

1. **Maintaining Professional Integrity:** Raising the passing rate emphasizes the importance of the future doctors' role in society and instills in them a sense of obligation and responsibility. Increasing the pass rate underscores the significance of the future physicians' position in society and fosters a sense of duty and accountability in them.
2. **Assuring Competency:** Because medicine is so important, it demands a high degree of skill and competence. Increasing the bar guarantees that only people who possess a deep comprehension and aptitude will be allowed to practice medicine.

Raising the standard is only one aspect of improving the passing rate for the MBBS exam; another is demonstrating a dedication to patient safety, ethics, and excellence in healthcare.

In conclusion: It is critical to strike a compromise between upholding standards and making sure that everyone can still attend medical education. Any modifications to the passing rate ought to be closely observed in light of how they may affect the standard of instruction provided to aspiring physicians. A higher passing rate has the potential to inspire or deter students. Institutions must review their curricula and methods of instruction to get students ready for the new passing requirements.

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