Assessment in MDS Prosthodontics programme

Any educational programme is assessed during and at the end of the programme with the following goals. The assessment should provide direction and motivation for future learning, protect the public by upholding high professional standards and screening out professionals who are incompetent and meet public expectations of self-regulation. Naturally the successful candidates will be awarded with the degree which is a brand, the society will accept for its safety and competency. So assessment is important but we should be clear on what we should assess. It is fairly a good list; acquisition and application of knowledge and skills, habits of mind and behavior, communication, professionalism, clinical reasoning and judgment, teamwork and practice-based learning.

The system of assessment presently employed in our universities does not encompass the above lists. The MDS examination consists of four theory papers and two days of practical examination. The first paper includes all the related medical subjects tested within three hours. Its effectiveness and objectivity is questionable. The next two papers of three hours include the entire prosthodontics from complete dentures to implant dentistry. No proper assessment on the knowledge which the candidate should essentially acquire can be evaluated by these two papers. The fourth paper is a himalayan essay, the objectivity of which is yet to be proved. If we are genuinely interested, the whole programme should be semesterised and the subjects are assessed as follows: Basic medical subjects (at the end of 12 months), Removable prosthodontics (at the end of 18 months), Fixed prosthodontics and maxillofacial prosthetics (at the end of 24 months), Implantology, Occlusion, TMJ, Aesthetics (at the end of 30 months), Clinical examination (at the end of 36 months). Clinical examination need be administered only if the candidate is passing all the theory papers. Minimum pass mark should be 50% in each subject. Thesis synopsis has to be submitted at the end of 9 months and the thesis document to be submitted at the end of 30th month. In the present system of clinical examination, the following exercises should be included viz. directly observed practical skills, case-based discussion and mini clinical evaluation exercises. The present practical examination schedule is inadequate both in duration and content. First let us correct the duration. For three candidates, two days of practical examination is essential. For six candidates, it should be three days and for nine candidates it should be enhanced to four days with the presently appointed four examiners. Health universities should seriously think of the assessment pattern we have to employ so that our society gets specialist service it deserves.

Dr. Jayakar Shetty M.
Dr. K. Chandrasekharan Nair