



EDUCATION FOR HEALTH

EDITORIAL

Education for Health: What's in a Name?

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This issue of *Education for Health* presents a good opportunity to reflect on the journal, its origins and current foci. We look at the journal's name, to ask of the journal: Education for whom? Education how? And what type of 'Health'?

In 2005, a series of meetings of the journal's editors and editorial board produced the guiding statement that "*Education for Health (EFH)* is the journal of the Network: TUFH and is dedicated to the dissemination of work consistent with the organization's mission and objectives in international health." Specifically, this mission focuses on the linkages between academic institutions and others working to improve health and healthcare. To this end, *EFH* continues to encourage submission of manuscripts that:

- address community-based education of health professionals
- address community-based healthcare delivery, especially when linked with training institutions
- describe and evaluate collaborations between academia and health service organizations designed to promote community health
- address multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to health professions education and service delivery
- address models and systems of education, research and service delivery that link developing and developed countries

Education for whom? A little over 20 years ago, the journal's answer would have been the education of medical students, residents and their faculty. Today, the target audience has changed, expanded to include all health professionals as well as the community at large in some cases. While most articles published in *EfH* still address issues in medical education – witness the papers in the current issue by AlHaqwi et al. and Ibrahim et al. focusing on medical students in Saudi Arabia and residents in Pakistan, respectively – three other papers in this issue, those by Macnab et al., du Toit et al. and Gonzalez et al., address other types of learners including rural youth in Uganda, mid-level 'eye care professionals' in the Western Pacific Islands, and employees of a community mental health agency in the state of Texas, USA. Recall also two special issues of *Education for Health* within the last three years, one focusing on partnerships in health education and healthcare delivery ("Towards Unity for Health: The Quest for



Evidence”, Boelen et al., August 2007) and the other addressing the needs of indigenous populations (“The Role and Impact of Indigenous Community Health Workers”, Parker and Kaufman, August 2009).

Education how? At an earlier point in the life of the journal, there would have been a narrower, yet then very appropriate, response to this question. Previously, published studies principally focused on new educational philosophies, often on the then new problem-based learning, and on comparisons of various teaching strategies. These assessments of educational innovations are still represented in this current issue, in the articles by Cook et al. on curricular approaches to help students become better medical teachers and by Zerwic et al. with tips to educators for better visual presentation of posters and talks. But we also see in this issue of *EfH* papers addressing education at the community level to directly impact the oral hygiene of rural youth (Macnab et al.) and partnerships between academia and the local community to improve mental health outcomes (Gonzalez et al.).

And what type of ‘health’ does the journal’s title imply? Initially, when the journal addressed the education of physicians, its focus was on physical and mental health within the individual, i.e., on diagnosing and treating biomedically-defined disease as traditionally recognized and addressed by physicians. But with the journal’s expanded focus on the education of a broad range of health professionals and on the important role of communities in education and practice, its notions of “health” have broadened to now also include the health of populations (communities and countries, as well as social determinants of health) and fostering wellness to maximize human potential.

The education of the healthcare worker has been a point of attention for the journal in two other important capacities. First, one of the journal’s areas of focus is publication of work related to multi- and interdisciplinary approaches to health professions education and service delivery. Better understanding interprofessional education is increasingly important in preparing healthcare providers to meet the complex needs of their patients and communities. A second area of focus has been to publish information to inform organizational and public policy on the education and then retention of health professionals for work with underserved populations and countries. To this end, studies on workforce education and training demonstrating successful career outcomes are important to our *EfH* readership.

So, what is in a name? A lot is conveyed in just three words: *Education for Health!*

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