

MBBS curriculum revised after 21 years

New syllabus to come into effect from August

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From August 2019, students graduating from medical colleges in the country will be trained not just to be good clinicians but also good communicators. After a gap of 21 years, the Medical Council of India (MCI) on Friday finalised the new undergraduate curriculum that acknowledges the importance of ethics, responsiveness to needs of patients and their families, and communication skills.

The MCI's Board of Governors approved the document, which revisits the 1997 syllabus in context of emerging diseases and scientific advances. The revised document has been put up on the MCI website.

"The new undergraduate curriculum regulations are more learner-centric, patient-centric, gender-sensitive, outcome-oriented, and environment appropriate. The result is an outcome-driven curriculum, which conforms to global trends," says

Right treatment

Features of the new graduate medical curriculum include:



- A separate programme on attitude, ethics and communication

- Foundation course for students from diverse backgrounds

- Use of mannequins and models for clinical learning

- More importance given to mental health

- Making examination of patients more contextual to their gender and social status

- Emphasis on maintaining accurate and clear records of patients

the three-volume curriculum document.

No more rote learning

Called 'Competency-based UG Curriculum for the Indian Medical Graduate', the new syllabus marks a radical shift from old times when rote and classroom learning was the norm in MBBS training.

V.K. Paul, Chairperson of the MCI Board of Governors, told *The Hindu* on Saturday that a course called Attitude, Ethics and Communication (AETCOM), which will run across all the years of MBBS, is a new addition to the syllabus.

"The emphasis now is more on training students in communicating effectively with patients, and counselling people for organ donations or other challenging procedures. For example, they will be assessed on how well they handle patient relations in sensitive situations, offer care, and obtain consent. All these things will count along with competencies and skills," Dr. Paul said.

New elements

"In a first, the new curriculum provides clinical exposure to students in the very first year instead of the se-

cond. A month-long foundation course has been introduced to help students from diverse backgrounds transition better. The foundation course seeks to prepare students for the MBBS duration," Dr. Paul said.

Another new element is the introduction of elective subjects. Now, students can pick subjects of their choice. Dedicated time has been allotted for self-directed learning and co-curricular activities.

The new curriculum also encourages the use of medical mannequins and models for clinical learning even though the use of human cadavers for anatomy training will continue.

There will be more emphasis on mental health and public health.

Stating that students need to be trained in soft skills, especially in communication, K.S. Ravindranath, former Vice-Chancellor of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in Karnataka, said introduction of early clinical exposure and electives, apart from focus on doctor-patient relationship, will be a game-changer.