

## Basics in Medical Education

Zubair Amin, MD, MHPE and Khoo Hoon Eng, PhD  
National University of Singapore, Singapore  
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Reviewed by

David J. Solomon, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Office of Medical Education Research and Development (OMERAD)  
and the Department of Medicine, College of Human Medicine, Michigan State University

*Basics in Medical Education* by Zubair Amin, MD MHPE and Khoo Hoon Eng, PhD. is written as an introductory text for medical teachers. The authors' aim is to provide a broad overview of medical education for someone new to the field. In the words of the authors ".....in this simple non-intimidating book, we promise to tell the general medical teachers what they need to know about medical education. We strive towards making the book a readable, jargon-free, precise yet complete guide to teaching and learning in medicine." (quote from the Preface xi)

The book contains a preface and 38 short chapters organized into 11 sections. There are also four appendices. The book begins with a brief overview of the basic competencies of medical teaching and a historical perspective of medical education in Western and Asian medical schools. This is followed by several chapters on general educational concepts. The next sections focus on curriculum design, educational objectives and general instructional methods. Next are large sections on specific methodologies for clinical teaching and problem based learning. The last major section covers student assessment and program evaluation. The book ends with short sections on the Internet in medical education and educational research. The appendices contain resource material including a glossary of terms.

The authors have made a real effort to "practice what they preach" employing the techniques of good instructional design in writing *Basics in Medical Education*. They begin most chapters with a brief overview and set of learning objectives. Sections within each chapter tend to be short, well labeled and contain a great deal of tables and figures that help organize and summarize the material contained in the section. The writing is simple, concise and free of jargon. Most chapters end with a list of key points

summarizing the "take-home messages" from the chapter and a list of references and readings. The authors have tried to include references and readings that are easily obtainable, often including freely available material on the Web and articles from major widely distributed journals.

In my view the authors have largely succeeded in their goal of creating a text that provides a broad overview of medical education for a new medical teacher. They do an excellent job of covering the field of medical education. The book is well organized and easy to read and their use of good instructional design techniques not only helps facilitate comprehension of the material, but also provides a good example for the reader to emulate.

If the book has a weakness it is in a lack of depth in the coverage of specific topics. This is not really a fair criticism as the book is clearly intended as an introductory text broadly covering the field of medical education. Going into more depth in each of the areas would have detracted from this goal.

I highly recommend this book for anyone entering the field of medical education. It would also serve as an excellent text in faculty development fellowship programs and would be a good addition to medical libraries in teaching hospitals, residency programs and medical schools.