

WCM-Q symposium teaches assessment skills to boost learning outcomes

Doha – December 19, 2016: Leading Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) scholars presented a series of workshops explaining the most effective new methods for assessing learners in health professional education.

The three-day symposium at WCM-Q, titled ‘Assessment in Health Professional Education’, was led by Dr Janice Hanson and Dr. Amal Khidir, Associate Professor of Pediatrics; other speakers were Dr. Mai Mahmoud, Assistant Professor of Medicine; and Dr. Ziyad Mahfoud, Associate Professor of Healthcare Policy and Research. The speakers used a series of interactive sessions to explain the latest assessment methods and instruments to faculty, physicians, nurses, pharmacists, interns, residents and allied health professionals.

Effective assessment tools are essential learning aids for health professionals who rely on comprehensive feedback from tutors to ensure they have gained the advanced skills and knowledge they need to provide quality care to patients.

Visiting expert Dr. Janice Hanson, Director of Educational Research and Development in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, said: “Traditional methods of assessment have often been based upon awarding grades and have tended to provide little or no narrative feedback to learners. This might be effective at communicating whether someone has passed or failed an exercise, but it is extremely ineffective at explaining the reasons why someone passed or failed, what they did right and what they did wrong. Crucially, it does not give enough feedback about what they need to do to improve their performance and meet the learning aims of the exercise.

“This is why assessment tools are so valuable. If we can provide learners with comprehensive feedback, whether narratively or using other methods, they can understand what they need to do to improve, which not only helps them target their learning but also boosts morale and motivation.”

In addition to demonstrating how to write high-quality narrative evaluations, the learning activity explained the strengths and weaknesses of several different methods of learner assessment, how to determine the validity of assessment instruments, and how to apply frameworks for evaluation to judgments about learners. The skills and knowledge taught by the workshops were applicable to both classroom-based and clinic-based learning exercises.

Dr. Khidir said: “It is really rewarding to see the level of engagement of the participants. On a separate note, this activity engaged the students in professional development, too. The organizing committee is thankful to the fourth-year medical students Ali Khairat, Tarek Barbar, Diala Steitieh and Saleha Abbasi, and to our alumnus and now associate professor of emergency medicine, Dr. Grigory Ostrovsky, who participated in the preparation of the videos that generated a lot of reflections and discussions that deepened the understanding of the concepts.”



The symposium, organized as part the WCM-Q Division of Continuing Professional Development's 'Educators Across the Health Care Spectrum' series, used workshops, small and large group discussions, role-play and hands-on activities to allow participants to gain a thorough practical understanding of assessment tools. The event was open to participants from WCM-Q and from other health professions educational institutions in Qatar.

Deema Al-Sheikhly, Director of Continuing Professional Development, said: "Effective assessment is a vital part of any learning experience, but this has traditionally been somewhat overlooked and faculty often feel they require more formal training in this area. This seminar aimed to comprehensively answer that need."

This activity is an Accredited Group Learning Activity (Category 1) as defined by the Qatar Council for Healthcare Practitioners - Accreditation Department. It is also accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of Weill Cornell Medical College and Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar.

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Photos Captions:

Photo1: Dr. Amal Khidir of Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q) speaks at the WCM-Q Assessment in Health Professional Education symposium.

Photo2: Expert speakers at the WCM-Q Assessment in Health Professional Education symposium, from left: Dr. Ziyad Mahfoud of WCM-Q, Dr. Amal Khidir of WCM-Q, Dr. Janice Hanson of the University of Colorado School of Medicine and Dr. Mai Mahmoud of WCM-Q.

Photo3: Diala Steitieh, Ali Khairat, Dr. Grigory Ostrovsky, Saleha Abbasi and Tarek Barbar.

About Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar

Weill Cornell Medicine - Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers a comprehensive six-year medical program leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCM-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCM-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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