

LETTER to EDITOR

**Higher Education Spatial Planning Program in Iran and the Role of Centers of Excellences for Medical Sciences:
A Way to Achieve to Scientific Authority in the Field of Health**

Mehrdad Mostaghaci¹, Saeedeh HajjHosseini², Reza Behnamfar^{3,*}¹ Education Development Center, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran,² Center of Excellence for Occupational Medicine, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran³ Education Development Center, Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences, Yazd, Iran,

*Education Development Center Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences

Bonali St, Yazd, 8916977443, IRAN

Tel: 03538271351

Fax: 03538271351

Email: reza82hr@yahoo.com

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Dear Editor in chief

Centers of Excellences (CoEs, also known as capability center or competency center) define as a team, a corporate group, or a shared facility that provides research, leadership, best practices, support and training for a specific area. A CoE conducts the organization as a unity in some particular area of focus such as skill, discipline, business, technology, or a broad area of study. A CoE may be aimed at the revival of stopped projects (1, 2). Inside an organization, a CoE point to a specified group of people, a particular department or a shared center. CoE could also demonstrate a network of institutions collaborating with each other to follow excellence in a specific topic (2).

In universities and academic institutions, a CoE refers to a group of people with a perspicuous focus on a specific area of research, and bring together scientists from different areas and provide shared facilities (3). In healthcare services, the term of CoE usually refers to a center that provides appropriate and easily accessible medical services for patients (4).

CoEs are known as one of the most important factors for country development (5). CoEs have additional special characteristics in compared to the other scientific research centers. The diversity of CoEs is one of the development factors in human communities (6). CoEs try to respond to the requirements of the communities using their original components. These essential elements are innovation, competitiveness, quality and technical knowledge (6).

In Iran, several significant proceedings have been accomplished for the establishment of the CoEs. But it is necessary to accelerate this process to achieve the desired results based on the international standards for CoEs, and experiences of developed countries.

Recently, the authors emphasized the importance of CoEs in a Persian letter (7). But given the importance and necessity of it at the international level and opening up a platform for discussion, exchange of ideas and recommendations, this letter is written. We are now working on another manuscript about the CoE development, which will be published early.

High education spatial planning program is one of the most important documents for the evolution of medical education in Iran. High-level political support from mission-oriented, decentralization and enhance the capabilities of the medical universities in Iran, is the main strength of this project (5). Virtual Learning development and preparation the international map for spatial planning are other objectives. For the development of medical education and entering the global arena, we must use a clear model for the CoEs for medical sciences.

High education spatial planning program is a great achievement that will organize health education in Iran. Innovation and evolution culture must be institutionalized

with the participation of all stakeholders in the health system. Monitoring the national upstream documents of the health system is necessary for promotion in medical education.

The important objectives of CoEs are: Utilization of comparative advantages and potencies of the universities commensurate with future needs of Iran, knowledge-based development, increase the researchers' scientific potencies, purposeful expansion of the frontiers of knowledge, innovation in Science and Technology, and promoting the scientific status of each country (8, 9).

Drawing the partnership model of CoEs in achieving scientific authority in the field of health in high education spatial planning program is one of the objectives of Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Iran. Reduce the scientific gap between Iran and health scientific centers in the world is one of the main missions of CoEs. There are potential capacities in CoEs for medical sciences, which could be used for the future developments in medical education in Iran (8).

The original vision for all institutions involved in health in upstream health system documents (such as Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran, and, Comprehensive Health Scientific Map) is access to scientific authority in the field of health and moving in the frontiers of knowledge. So structure and activities of CoEs should be in the way to achieve these goals (5).

CoEs must specify their path, and move with discernment towards the advancement of medical education. Drawing a bright map for activity and interaction of CoEs and medical universities is an essential need in medical education. CoEs mission in drawing this map, method of the influence of CoEs in medical education, ranking method of CoEs, and criteria for CoEs future development are all important (8, 10).

With organizing of interaction between CoEs and Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the CoEs participation in achieving scientific authority in the field of health will be more and more (11).

A scientific model for the CoEs network should be drawn (11). Draw a clear model for CoEs participation in achieving the goals of the Iran's health system is necessary. The specific mission of each CoEs should be clearly specified (11). CoEs roles in future developments in health and medical education should be identified. In the ranking process of CoEs, their activities in medical education development should be considered. In order to increase the visibility, international cooperation of CoEs should be increased. Enhanced international interactions, publication of scientific articles, and demonstrate the scientific capabilities of CoEs could be also helpful in this context (9, 11). It is necessary to identify the index points where we have more ability, and _____

reinforce these points with the support of CoEs (12).
 Redesign of Iran's scientific development program is one of the main national issues. If Iran wants to move in this direction, the Comprehensive Scientific Map of Iran should _____

be redesigned with the participation of CoEs, and in this way special attention to innovation is necessary.

We declare no competing interests.

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