

Letter to the Editor

Sir

I have read various articles on community health in the *Eastern Mediterranean health journal*. I have also noticed that many of the universities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region offer programmes in public health/public health dentistry.

I would like to bring to your notice the situation in India. In India, postgraduate degrees are provided in various specialties, community medicine or public health being one among them. Doctors and dentists are trained for a period of 3 years mainly in epidemiology and prevention of diseases with an emphasis on preventive methods. Other core areas of training in the specialty include planning, management, survey procedures, sociology and biostatistics. The field training involves conducting regular treatment camps where the postgraduate students and staff in the specialty of community medicine visit various rural and remote areas using mobile units and provide treatment free of charge to the needy who do not have access to medical/dental care. They also deliver health education. The

camps usually provide both medical and dental treatment. The dental camps are sponsored by various organizers and are conducted in various public places, such as government schools, which are accessible to the general public. In the field of community medicine, common ailments are treated and immunization is provided

The treatment provided in the dental camps is mainly extractions, restorative procedures like amalgam and temporary fillings, sealant applications, paedodontic procedures and oral prophylaxis. Atraumatic restorative treatment procedures are also performed.

It would be useful if a component of medical/dental outreach camp training and medical/dental health education delivery were made mandatory in the curriculum of students in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. It would not only benefit patients in rural areas, but would help the students to become competent in field training and prepare them for success as public health professionals.

Meghashyam Bhat
Assistant Professor, Department of Community
Dentistry, Manipal College of Dental Sciences,
Manipal University, Manipal, Karnataka State,
India (msyamb@yahoo.com).
