

Saturday, January 15, 2011

To,

The Honorable Vice Chancellor

Kerala University of Health & Allied Sciences

Respected Sir,

Sub: Equivalence between Regular and External PG degree in Homoeopathy – impact on standards of Homoeopathic education & Practice - Observations Reg.

We, the All Kerala Homoeopathic Post Graduate Teachers Association, submit the following for your kind consideration and favorable action.

There is a strong attempt at present in certain quarters to equalize regular PG degree and external PG degree in Homoeopathy on the background of pay revision of Homeopathic Medical College Teachers of Kerala. We as teachers fear that this move will result in deterioration of academic standards in the field of Homoeopathic medical education & practice. The reason for our concern lies in the very nature of external PG degree, which are as follows:

- The external PG degree is an off campus course which does not require formal institutionalized training. Candidates of external PG are not required to attend outpatient and inpatient duties, conduct seminars, discussions and classes by qualified teachers etc as is the case of regular PG students. The relevance of such a course in the field of medical education is highly suspect, to say the least.

- The external PG degree is of two years duration, while the regular PG degree is of three year duration. The qualification for enrolling in external PG course is only a diploma in homoeopathy while for regular PG course it is a degree in homoeopathy. For the regular MD student, this usually means 3 years of strenuous work after a 5½ year course of BHMS degree. The External MD student on the other hand, can get a “Post Graduate” degree in a leisurely 2 years even without having a degree in homoeopathy!
 - It may be relevant to recall the Honorable Supreme Court judgment on February 25, 2009, (Civil Appeal No. 4173 of 2008, Annamalai University versus Secretary to Govt., Information & Tourism Dept & Others) which observed that a Masters degree awarded to a candidate who has not undergone a degree (Bachelor’s) course cannot be valid.
- The external PG course can never be equated to the regular PG course with reference to the syllabus, conduct of the course and the mode of examinations. Further none of the Universities of Kerala has recognized or approved the external PG in Homoeopathy.
- Diploma in homeopathy is the only qualification mentioned for admission to this course (CCH Regulations Special provisions for external candidates 5th November 2001). So these courses are meant only for senior most diploma holders of before 1983 and not for Degree holders.
- External MD is a course approved by the Central Council of Homoeopathy(CCH), but it does not mean that it is considered to be an *equivalent* course to regular MD. To give an example, DHMS, D.F.Hom. M.F.Hom., F.F. Hom. etc are courses approved by CCH but are not considered as *equivalent* to a degree. Further, The Central Council of Homoeopathy has discontinued the external PG degree course last year after protests from many quarters.

- Govt. of Kerala had appointed a commission in 2001 chaired by Honorable Pro Vice Chancellor of Kerala University Prof.S. Kevin on the matter of External PG course in homoeopathy. This commission submitted the report in 2003 which clearly stated that External MD cannot be equivalent to Regular MD and it cannot maintain the academic standard expected of a PG degree in medicine.

A concise comparison between the two courses:

Item	Regular MD	External MD
Duration	3 years	2 years
Minimum Eligibility	BHMS	Diploma
Selection process	PG Entrance by CEE Govt. of Kerala	No entrance
Criteria of admission	Exclusively on merit	Payment only
Mode of teaching	Regular classroom oriented	Correspondence
Training	OPD & IPD Regular & systemic training Teaching students Seminars, clinical discussion, journal club,	Nothing
House Job	One year	No house job
Attendance	3 year regular	No attendance. Only for exam
Examinations	Part. I & II	1 exam
University approval	Approved by all universities in Kerala	Not approved by any

Item	Regular MD	External MD
		universities in Kerala.
Kerala Homeopathic Service rule 2001	Approved	Not included due to lack of 3 year regular attendance
Colleges in Kerala	Now in 2 Govt. Colleges. Will start soon in aided colleges also	Conducted by deemed universities of Maharsathra, Tamil Nadu etc.

Adverse Impact of equalization

It is a matter of much concern to us that if an off campus course of 2 years duration is equalized with a regular residential institutionalized course of 3 years duration just for the sake of service benefits, it would have an adverse impact on the standard of Homoeopathic medical education in the state.

- Equalization of external MD course with regular MD will be a retrograde step in the progress of homoeopathic medical education. The morale of regular PG students will be dented on the realization that their hard earned postgraduate degree is seen as equal to what is only a little more than a correspondence course!
- Equivalence will create the situation where even those not belonging to PG teaching departments will be seeking eligibility in becoming PG examiners!
- PG degree is a preferential qualification for appointment as tutors in Homoeopathic Medical Colleges (The Kerala Homoeopathic Medical College Service Rule 2001). If the authorities see external PG course as equal to regular PG degree, then it will be a severe blow to the prospects of fresh regular PG holders applying to the post of tutors.

This problem is especially urgent now as the Public Service Commission has recently invited application for appointment to the post of tutors in several subjects.

- PG degree is also a preferential qualification for promotion of teachers in Homoeopathic medical colleges. The prospects of promotion of teachers with regular PG degree may be hampered if even those with external PG degree will be seen as having equivalent qualification

We hope it is very clear from the above statements why external PG should not be equalized with regular MD(Hom) for any purpose. We therefore humbly request you not to consider regular PG and External PG in Homoeopathy as equivalent qualifications, as and when the matter comes before you for consideration. We hope you will intervene in this matter and there by save Homoeopathic education and practice from disgrace.

Yours faithfully,

President
Dr. Arun Prasad K P