

EDITORIAL

The developing Islamic countries are in dire need of comprehensive Health Care Programs. Each citizen of the Muslim World requires an adequate medical care besides food and shelter as basic necessities of life. Our purpose is not to criticize the present health care facilities in these countries but to suggest certain ideas in helping to solve some of the problems. For instance, the problem of medical or health care manpower shortage in these countries constitutes a baffling situation. The migration of medical manpower from these countries to the West has actually aggravated the already existing shortage. The purpose of this editorial is not to propose a solution for the difficult problem of migration but to suggest certain possible solutions with the present actualities in these countries.

Even in the developed countries, it has been acknowledged that it would be impossible to have enough doctors of medicine or dentistry to care for each of its citizens. Therefore, today in the U.S.A. there are increasing numbers of programs for training Physician's Assistants, Surgeon's Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Medical Assistants, Midwives, Dental Assistants, etc. This of course makes sense in terms of the need of people, since almost 80% of visits to Emergency Rooms and Doctors' offices are due to minor ailments, self limited diseases and benign conditions manageable by conservative treatments which do not require a sophisticated medical school graduate

for their diagnosis or their treatment. Therefore, we suggest that developing Islamic countries put more emphasis on the mass production of such personnel.

Secondly, our present age is becoming more aware of preventive medicine and family medicine most of which are covered by Tib-al Nabi and the medical practices of Hakims. Therefore, instead of banning our village Hakims, osteopaths and naturo-paths, we should bring them under supervision and a means of quality control to keep the charlatans out. If such persons would be trained in the practical aspects of preventive medicine, family practice, etc. for a period of six months and be certified by the governments and then distributed according to the needs of locality in the countryside, there would be at least some primary care of the poverty stricken villagers, badawis, herdsmen, nomads, etc.. Together with a program of training such as above, the Institutes of Islamic Medicine in Medical Schools or Universities may contribute considerably to the development of medically and scientifically valid aspects of the Tib-al Hukama as well as shed new light and bring new discoveries in the field of medicine. This is no exaggeration when one considers what Mao Tse Tung did for health care of over 800 million Chinese by bringing Classical Chinese medicine into the fold of Modern Medicine and finding the scientific place of acupuncture anesthesia as a great modern contribution from China.

When oppression exists, even the bird dies in its nest. (saying of the Prophet)