

The Need to Have a Critical Review of Medical Conferences in Jordan (*Preface*)

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There is a large number of medical conferences which are being held in Jordan every year. Some of these conferences are organized by professional societies in the medical association and others are being generated by institutions such as the Royal Medical Services (RMS), King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC) and various medical schools in the country.

The themes of the conferences could be general or could be focused on a wide subspecialty area with few or no specifically focused single theme. Some societies have successfully held their conferences jointly with international professional bodies. The conferences may take a local, but more frequently, a regional flavor and on rare occasions an international flavor.

In the conferences, typically a number of international speakers are invited to talk about a chosen topic which might be of interest to the audience. Many of us have attended the talks of these speakers in various locations and can predict reasonably accurately the content of the talk. Usually, little or no new data are shown and only published data are shown. This is frustrating for those of us who are actively researching and would like to see some new data, even in their partial form before publication. The local work is given minor importance despite

the fact that there may be local speakers. The local speakers usually reciprocate what international speakers do with little or no reference to local or regional work. In the end, one gets the content of a traditional lecture with little interaction between speaker and his host. Workshops or small group discussions are particularly absent.

I believe that the time has come to modify the format and the content of these conferences if we, in Jordan, are to get the benefit we expect from the major advances in the medical sciences.

I believe that we have to make do without conferences of general nature; such as the conference of general medicine, general surgery and turn this to a focused chosen topic that answers specific educational or research needs. I believe we have to reduce the number of international speakers and make use of local and regional experts. We have to instruct or guest speakers to present results of recent work which we cannot get from published papers or books. We need to make sure that workshops and group discussions are being generated as well as interaction with the guest speaker to make maximum benefit of his time.

We must make sure that enough local and regional work is presented and not just

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quotations of international works only. In this fashion, we can encourage our local and regional researchers and expose their work to a wide audience. The various medical institutions in the country have enough number of researchers of variable work that can be easily presented in these conferences.

Additionally, we have to insist on the fact that an invited speaker must present an abstract that can be published in the conference proceeding as a supplement of this journal.

There is a great need to function as a focal point to all our Arab colleagues to meet in Amman and to review their work and our work. I call upon all concerned parties to take this issue seriously and start working on it in order to advance the format and the content of medical conferences.