



LETTERS OF DIRECTOR

Scholarships for student research work: a challenge for Cuban Medical Education

Becas de investigación estudiantil, reto para la Educación Médica cubana

Mr. Director;

In Cuba, the training of graduates with competencies to do research is a priority, especially Health Sciences graduates, but it is a reality that in spite of the transformations and efforts made, the student does not reach the development expected in this area from the subjects included on the syllabuses. That is why; extracurricular scientific activity plays an essential role in the training of the future professional.

At well-known universities such as Stanford, Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge, courses are organized and taught, allowing medical students to have the experience to collaborate on research projects.⁽¹⁾ Several European universities have projected to promote research with different strategies for the undergraduates, encouraging the student to do research in the final stages of the medical training.⁽²⁾

One of the alternatives that could be created to promote the scientific development of Medical Science students in Cuba is the creation of research scholarships. These spaces would allow the exchange and improvement of science, as well as the development of lines of doing research for the contribution and solution of health problems all over the country. In addition, to increase the scientific teamwork among students and professionals from the different regions of the country, generating networks of cooperation and common work, breaking this way the geographic barriers that delay the growth of science.

Currently, there are two research scholarships for students in the country: the "Henrich Quincke" scholarship in Havana and the "Iván Pavlov" scholarship in Santiago de Cuba that are distinguished scientific spaces where workshops and work sessions are offered to spread their experiences and knowledge to the new generations.

The scientific potential of medical universities in Cuba, which is considered among the highest in Latin America, is well known. Besides, Cuban Health System has research centers in all provinces of the country, with professors and students willing to promote knowledge.⁽³⁾ Therefore, it is necessary to inquire for: why not to open in the country other scholarships to promote research among the medical students?

The new social demands, both national and international, require a more prepared professional, not only in the assistance profile, but also in the administrative, teaching and research profiles. Research as a source of building new knowledge, requires skilled professionals, well-trained critical thinking, not only in postgraduate level, therefore new strategies are needed from undergraduate stages.



The current development of new technologies in society has allowed the deployment of new resources and ways of learning, which becomes a better efficiency in sectors and processes, including the research process with direct influence on the student.

A better scientific grounding from the undergraduate level is not only a necessity, but also a demand for the student organization. The creation of these research scholarships should be a priority for the teaching staff. These spaces will constitute a stimulus to the work developed by the new generations and, at the same time, a positive and objective influence on the development of scientific research in Cuba.

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