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Learning humanistic values in Nepal

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I read with great interest the article titled ‘Humanism in Asian medical education - A scoping review’ (Zhu et al., 2021). The article provides an overview of the teaching of humanism in medical schools in Asia. Teaching humanistic values is still not common among Asian medical schools and the published literature is predominantly from a few countries.

The Himalayan country of Nepal has also taken initiatives to strengthen the learning of humanistic values by medical students.

Initiatives have been conducted at different institutions including KIST Medical College, Lalitpur, Nepal, and Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS), Lalitpur, Nepal among others. I believe that the medical humanities can play an important role in fostering humanistic values among medical students. An overview of the discipline in Nepal was provided in an article published in 2014 (Dhakal et al., 2014). Recently several initiatives are being undertaken at PAHS and the undergraduate medical program at the institution has the objective of creating doctors for rural Nepal.

I do agree that there have been problems with the sustainability of these initiatives in Nepal. The language of medical education in Nepal is English like in many other Asian countries. However, the activities and material used were adapted to the Nepalese context, where possible. The scoping review about humanism in Asian medical education can be made more comprehensive by including the initiatives and publications from Nepal, a country where despite various challenges, initiatives have been undertaken in this important area. These studies do fit into the core

characteristics of the Integrity, Excellence, Compassion & Collaboration, Altruism, Respect & Resilience, Empathy, and Service (IECARES) framework used by the authors.

The immediate and short-term impacts of these initiatives have been published and the medium-term impact has been studied and is under review for publication. The challenge with measuring the medium to long-term impact of these initiatives is the possibility of other activities undertaken by the student also influencing the outcomes and introducing bias. A variety of methods have been used to foster teaching-learning of humanistic values. Though there are limitations as mentioned earlier, the addition of these initiatives may add strength and greater representativeness to the scoping review.

Note on Contributor

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Declaration of Interest

No conflicts of interest are associated with this paper.

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