

President's Page

There is no Substitute for Talent

HARISIOS BOUDOULAS

Foundation of Biomedical Research, Academy of Athens, Greece



High quality training of physicians should be the number one priority of Medical Schools, Academic Medical Centers, Scientific Societies, postgraduate training programs, Departments of Health and other organizations responsible for the education of physicians. Thus, in order to meet the needs of the endless evolution of science, technology, and eventually the art of medicine, officials continuously reshape the training programs and the core curriculums. All responsible for these changes should have one common goal in mind, that is better and effective training which will assist physicians to become better healers and help them easily adapt to the continuous evolution of medical science-medical art.

All these changes, however, do not take into consideration one important (probably the most important) factor related to training: the quality of the teacher and the quality of the student. The final result of all education depends greatly on the quality of the teachers and the students. It is easy to change rules re-

lated to education, but it is much more difficult to create effective teachers. As Henry Adams stated, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Thus, the creation of first class teachers and the recruitment of first class students should be the primary goal of training programs. Educators, trainees and legislators should not have the false impression that the quality of training depends solely on the rules and the curriculum.

Therefore, the basic concern of all those responsible for education is to create talented teachers and to appoint them to key positions directly related to medical training. At the same time, in order to achieve the primary goal of excellent education, it is equally or even more important to select the best possible trainees in each program. In any system with talented teachers and talented students, regardless of the curriculum, the final product (i.e. the quality of education) will be great because there is no substitute for talent.

