

EDITORIAL

THE NEED FOR MORE MEDICAL SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

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At present there are three medical schools in Turkey - one in Ankara, another in Istanbul, and a third in Izmir. There are 6,900 to 7,400 doctors in actual practice, (1) with a majority of these in governmental institutions. Most of the doctors are concentrated in and around the large cities, with very few in the small towns and rural areas.

According to population projections, even if birth control is successful in Turkey, the population will be 36.9 million in 1970, and 40.3 million in 1975 (2). At the World Health Organization's Medical Education Conference, held in Teheran last October, it was stated that the optimum ratio of doctors to total population is one per 1,000 (3). If we in Turkey accept the more modest goal a one doctor per 2,000 people, we will need 20,000 doctors by 1975.

These figures indicate the urgent need for many more medical schools in Turkey. If our aim is to produce 1,500 to 1,800 doctors per year, we will need at least fifteen more medical schools during the next decade. Crowding the existing schools with more students than can actually be trained defeats the purpose. Graduates of such schools are not adequately trained, and generally have to spend long years in post-graduate training before they can be useful to the community. Recognizing the great need for additional medical schools in Turkey, the Turkish State Planning Board has provided for the opening of five new medical schools in the First Five Year Plan (4). These new schools should provide adequate laboratory and hospital facilities, a well-qualified teaching staff, and should limit admissions to 100 students per year.

Careful consideration must also be given to the location of the new schools. Ideally, they should be located in different parts of the country. However, as indicated above, one prerequisite for an effective medical school is a medical center or hospitals with facilities for training. The establishment of such medical centers takes time and a great deal of expense. It would, therefore, seem reasonable to utilize the existing facilities in the large cities and towns while, at

the same time, creating new centers in various parts of the country. Thus, more than one school could be established in Ankara and Istanbul. In our opinion, the facilities and staff of the Hacettepe Medical Center could easily become the nucleus of a new «Hacettepe School of Medicine» within Ankara University.

REFERENCES

1. Üner, R. and Fişek, N. H.: Studies on the Socialization of Health Services, Ministry of Health, Ankara 1961, p. 144.
2. Ibid. p. 8.
3. Report of World Health Organization Conference on Medical Education, Teheran, October 16 to 25, 1962.
4. State Planning Board, First Five Year Plan, 1963.