

## Climbing the Ladder of Academia: Transformative Leadership in Healthcare

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The healthcare ecosystem is one of the most complex systems with unpredictable prospects. In a world where titles and positions matter and influence in the most significant ways, it would be unfair to term a modern healthcare leader as just an entitled position. Healthcare leadership is not merely a position but more of an action. In the swiftly evolving landscape of healthcare, the role of academic leadership stands at a critical point. As the healthcare industry faces numerous challenges and opportunities, the need for transformative leadership in academia has become more essential.<sup>1</sup> This editorial seeks to briefly highlight the dimensions of transformative leadership within healthcare academia and its significant role in shaping the future of healthcare.

As healthcare institutions provide the nurturing factors of future healthcare professionals, effective leadership becomes essential to ensure that students are not only well-prepared in their theoretical knowledge but also equipped with the skills necessary to face the difficulties of modern healthcare systems. Academic leadership in undergraduate medical and dental colleges encompasses several responsibilities which include curriculum development, faculty support, student engagement, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and readiness to change.<sup>2</sup> New Leaders must balance these responsibilities while adapting to the rapid evolution of health sciences. A dynamic curriculum is one of the most significant features of quality education. Academic leaders must ensure that the current healthcare curriculum is evidence-based, integrates the latest research, and reflects the realities of clinical practice in a specific region. Transformative leadership must ensure the planning and development of modern curriculums which are at par with the recent advancements.<sup>3</sup>

Let us not forget that curricula are mere weapons, and we need soldiers to use them. Leaders in healthcare academia must prioritize faculty development by providing ongoing training opportunities, encouraging research, and fostering a collaborative environment.

An encouraging leader who supports the faculty in their

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professional growth not only enhances their teaching capabilities but also ensures they can serve as effective mentors and role models for students.<sup>4</sup>

With time, the effort and the journey that a person makes is lost and the most eloquent sign of success is the destination or the outcome. The biggest and most important stakeholders in our system are the students. It is the utmost need of the hour that healthcare leaders must cultivate an environment that promotes active learning, critical thinking, and scholarly growth. Academic leadership must come forward with support systems for student well-being, addressing mental health concerns, and ensuring a balanced workload. Engaging students in decision-making processes is also critical as they will be the future of our healthcare system. Medical Education leaders must instill a culture of continuous improvement within their institutions.<sup>5</sup> They must be equipped with qualities which empower them to encourage innovation, embrace change, and maintain high standards of excellence. By fostering an environment where both faculty and students are encouraged to challenge the status quo and seek better solutions, leaders can drive the evolution of educational practices and outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

Once our educational leaders have traced these essential requirements, they must not overlook the challenges and opportunities. The increasing complexity of healthcare, advancements in technology, and artificial intelligence, has evidently led to a requirement for leaders who are ready to accept technology-enhanced interventions into their academic structures. Academic leaders must integrate the use of artificial intelligence in data analysis and research, innovation in teaching methods, predictive analytics, and practical demonstrations.<sup>7</sup>

It is essential that academic leaders commit to their own continuous professional development as well. This includes staying informed about advancements in medical education, participating in leadership training programs, and seeking mentorship and peer support.

The future of healthcare depends on the strength and vision of its academic leadership. As the healthcare environment continues to evolve, so too must the strategies and approaches of those leading educational institutions. By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and maintaining a steadfast commitment to excellence, academic leaders can ensure that undergraduate medical and dental colleges remain at the forefront of healthcare education.

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None.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

None to declare.

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