

The Formation of Joint Orthopedic Congress of Medical Universities in Tehran City, Iran: Hopes and Worries

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Background

Modern human society is continuously becoming more and more complex and interconnected, thanks to advanced sources of communication, social mobility, and international relations. A considerable amount of science and data is one of the products of this complex human system, which stresses the quality of information transfer and education for all, and also derives socio-cultural evolution. Scientific societies are one of the crucial parts of socio-cultural evolution by their creative role (1). Scientists' role, as the members of the professional society, is becoming more sub-specialized and, at the same time, more relied on other sub-specialized members of the system, to keep the system running together.

Nowadays, in scientific societies, globalization is a universal concept, and more inclusive communities are becoming the pioneers, determining the future path of science followed by industry and technology (2, 3). This fact is true in small scales for national and university-based scientific societies. There are some national experiences of the consolidation of the provincial congresses in the form of regional congresses, such as the Persian Orthopedic Trauma Association (POTA) (4), and the Joint Ophthalmological Congress of the Shahid Beheshti and Iran Medical Universities. It was the basis of the idea of merging the annual orthopedic congresses of the three main universities of Tehran (the capital city of Iran) and forming the Joint Orthopedic Congress, OrthoBIT [www.orthobit.org]. In the following paragraphs, we explain the short history and experience of the new OrthoBIT.

For two years now, we have been facing a new phenomenon in the Iranian Orthopedic Community, the Joint Orthopedic Congress. Traditionally, we had three main orthopedic annual congresses in the city of Tehran since around 30 years ago. Each was held by one of the chief medical universities of the city. In recent years, the existence of numerous congresses has created many problems. Some of these problems include decrease in the number of participants due to the multiplicity of congresses, holding parallel congresses with similar topics, shortage of interesting, useful, or hot topics, limitation of skilled and capable speakers, issues of participants attending multiple

meetings in the capital from distant cities. There were also financial problems, including an increase in the congress expenses and sponsoring companies to cover all these congresses. These were some of the problems that were formally and informally discussed in every congress.

All of the mentioned issues brought together those involved in these scientific congresses, and eventually led them to form joint congresses. After a year and a half of discussion and consultation, the directors of the orthopedic departments of Tehran, Iran, and Shahid Beheshti universities of medical sciences decided to join their annual congresses. This can be a turning point not only in holding orthopedic congresses, but also in facilitating spirited collaborations between orthopedic groups.

This milestone itself is not positive or negative, and that is why it is essential to look at it from all aspects. This much appreciated and important step has been in action for two years now; however, it is definitely in need of criticism and correction. In order to improve it, there is a need to pay attention to its strengths and flaws, and put all the effort in order to avoid its failure.

The accumulation of congresses can cause multiple problems such as to put too much pressure on the congressional secretary, reduce the diversity of the congress content, and difficulty to cover the participants' needs. On the other hand, university-specific congress was a place where the graduates who share the common interests and memories could gather annually. Informal gathering beside the main scientific atmosphere can be one of the positive attractions and forms the soul of any gathering, which may fade in more inclusive alternatives with multiplicity and diversity of the participants.

There are other positive and negative points in the joint congress that can be improved effectively. We think getting feedback from the participants, speakers, and graduates is an important step in the progress of these meetings. We also sincerely hope that the experience of the Joint University Congress (OrthoBit) will be a great help in promoting scientific education, and that it will play a significant role in the enhancement of the orthopedics field in the country. Lastly, if we want to have a scientific look at this experience, the Orthobit with two years follow-up is still too young to be comprehensively analyzed. We know the necessity of its

presence, but its growth and maturation need much more care and patience as any other developing human society.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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