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Strengthening medical education through intersectoral collaboration: Current practices in Faculty of Medicine, University of Riau, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Intersectoral collaboration between and within sectors is crucial to the success of primary health care and fast-tracks the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs). Faculty of Medicine University of Riau (FMUR) commits to support these goals by producing high quality medical doctors to contribute to the improvement of community health status at the local and national levels. Having strategic geographical location (between South China Sea and Straits of Malacca) and homing for palm oil plantations, oil companies, paper and pulp mills, Riau Province is becoming one of the economic growth centers in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Riau is also facing challenges in health care service including endemicity of infection diseases (most importantly tuberculosis), triple burden of malnutrition (undernutrition, obesity and stunting) and the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

FMUR has collaborated with health, industrial and government sectors as an attempt to expose students with real work environment. Medical students have ample opportunities to learn in several affiliated hospitals including referral provincial and district hospitals. In addition to facility support, intersectoral collaboration involves guest lectures, funding assistance and expertise sharing. In agreement with the centre of excellence, FMUR implements three pillars of higher education comprising of educational activities, research, and community services based on local needs namely marine, coastal and cross-border area. Our curricula has also been designed to meet with the local needs and facilitate the involvement of various agencies by developing courses such as health management, complementary medicine, and border health.

In order to strengthen institutional capacity, FMUR has collaborated with other international and national educational institutes through joint research, scientific meetings and conferences. FMUR also supports for international student exchange to enhance interaction, cross-cultural exchange, and mutual intellectual interests between international and local students.

The sustainability of intersectoral collaboration needs both effective communication and the development of professional relationships. Some issues pertaining to intersectoral collaboration are lack of practical initiatives from health and government sectors towards intersectoral collaboration, differences in sectoral policy and regulation and lack of budgeting.

Keywords: Medical education; Collaboration; Riau

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