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Editorial

Dr John Norcini – A Pioneer in the Field of Medical Education joins the IJS Executive Committee

We are very privileged to announce that Dr John J Norcini, President and CEO of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research has joined the Executive Committee of the International Journal of Surgery.

John’s commitment to advancing standards in assessment is well known across the world from the time he served on the Internal Board of Medicine as Director of Psychometrics (1985–1988), Executive Vice President for Evaluation and Research (1988–1997) and Executive Vice President of the Institute for Clinical Evaluation (1997–2002). His background in psychology and his subsequent Ph.D. in Child Development (from Bryn Mawr College) fuelled his genius, intellect, creativity, perseverance, and insight into a strong generative force that shaped him for this lifelong pursuit of effective, pragmatic, and innovative assessment methodologies. So intense is his concentration on foundational principles in assessment, and so universal are the principles he propounds, that we often forget that he is Board Certified in Internal Medicine. In addition to assessment he is known for creating educational opportunities for health professions educators, discerning patterns from massive data sets and disseminating knowledge, and developing data resources, such as International Medical Education Directory (IMED) a repository of information on Medical Schools around the world.

Whether on Boards, Organisations or Universities the complementary duet between Norcini and the respective university or organization has resulted in remarkable synergies with outstanding impact, clearly evident through his publications and workshops. The potentials of these synergies was further advanced when Dr. Norcini became the first President and Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) in 2002. This appointment provided him new fields to enrich. His breadth of vision and leadership skills have seen the development of FAIMER institutes in Brazil, South Africa and India which are outstanding examples of institutional Medical Education and Research (IMED) a repository of information on Medical Schools around the world.

At the recent ceremony where he was invested with the prestigious P. Hubbard Award by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), Ruth-Marie E. Fincher, MD, Chair of the 2009 Hubbard Award Committee remarked that: “John Norcini has made exceptional contributions to the field of measurement and evaluation in both medical education and education in general. John’s outstanding scholarship, world-class reputation as a researcher and educator, magnitude of contributions, and long-standing involvement in the field of assessment are unparalleled. John has an outstanding record of fostering the development of evaluation methods and measurement techniques. He was one of the first scholars to show a link between certification results and patient outcomes in practice. He discredited the use of essays as a reliable assessment method. “Dr. Norcini was a pioneer in developing the mini clinical examination exercise for assessing clinical skills (mini-CEX), a peer-assessment tool (mini-PAT), and the concept of work-based assessment. The breadth of his research and development activities includes topics such as standard setting, scoring and rating methods, certification and recertification, item formats, item modeling, gender differences, written and computer-based examinations, essays, predictors of performance, standardized examinations, sources of measurement error, generalizability.
studies, score reproducibility, item response theory, testing time requirements, performance of foreign medical graduates, language proficiency, measurement of humanistic qualities and professionalism, cut scores and pass/fail decisions, performance and levels of expertise, profiles of clinical competence, performance feedback, and indicators of residency program performance. John is an accomplished and prolific scholar with at least 144 publications in a wide variety of journals, 16 book chapters, and 142 invited presentations and workshops that cover a wide range of topics in measurement and evaluation. These accomplishments are a testimony to the breadth and depth of his talent in the field. His review articles regarding methods of criterion-referenced assessment and standard setting have defined the field, and he is in much demand internationally for his expertise in this area.

"Colleagues describe John as a 'giant' in the field of medical evaluation. They note, 'Throughout this fantastic career, Dr. Norcini was a tireless developer, a bold innovator, a ferocious number cruncher, a prolific scholar, and most of all, a gentleman. There is no one more deserving of the Hubbard Award than John Norcini. He is a renaissance man of measurement and evaluation. Many of us work on specific areas of measurement. Few have the breadth and depth that Dr. Norcini has. He is one of a handful of psychometricians worldwide who truly knows the field inside out. It is difficult to think of anyone who is more deserving of the Hubbard Award. He is the epitome of the qualities enshrined in the Hubbard Awardees.'"

We are indeed privileged to have him on the Executive Committee of the Journal.

Reference


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