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Editorial

Do Medicine and Medical Education Need a Paradigm Shift?

Hermanto TJ*

Magister Program in Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga/ Universitas Airlangga Hospital

***CORRESPONDING AUTHOR**
Hermanto TJ
hermanto.tri@fk.unair.ac.id
Magister Program in Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga/ Universitas Airlangga Hospital

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From Standardization to Personalization

Modern medicine stands at a crossroads [1–6]. The Human Genome Project [7] and the Decade of the Brain [8–9] have revealed the profound biological and neurological individuality of every human being. Yet paradoxically, clinical practice and medical education continue to operate as if one method fits all. Patients are often reduced to diagnostic codes and treatment algorithms, while students are shaped through standardized curricula, uniform assessments, and teacher-centered instruction. The result is a gap between what science now knows, that every brain and body is unique, and how medicine is still practiced and taught.

Half a century ago, Ivan Illich [4], in *Medical Nemesis*, warned of the medicalization of life where health becomes a commodity and suffering a pathology. Today, his warning resounds in the rising prevalence of iatrogenic conditions, from overtreatment to complex disorders such as placenta accreta syndrome. Bernard Lown [5] in *The Lost Art of Healing*, criticized the erosion of empathy, while Atul Gawande's *Being Mortal* [6] reminds us that extending life is not the same as healing it. These critiques echo Sir William Osler's timeless insight: that the good physician treats the disease, but the great physician treats the patient who has the disease [10].

Medicine, in its current form, risks losing the capacity to care. The dominance of evidence-based medicine (EBM) - a vital framework when balanced with judgment - has in many settings hardened into a form of reductionism [11]. Insurance protocols, accreditation standards, and algorithmic checklists have replaced the bedside encounter as the heart of clinical practice. In the process, [12] Osler's distinction between *disease* and *illness,* between pathology and lived experience-fades [10]. The question, then, is not whether medicine can cure, but whether it can still care.

Here, Avicenna's philosophy [13] offers a counterpoint and a compass. His conception of medicine as both *art* and *science* insists on harmony between the body, mind, and spirit. Healing, in his view, is a moral and relational act as much as a biological one. To restore this balance, modern medicine must transcend its obsession with standardization and rediscover the person within the patient. Personalized medicine, informed by genomic and psychosocial understanding, points toward such reintegration: treating not just the disease in the body, but the meaning of illness in the life of a person [7,8,14].

If medicine must evolve, so too must medical education—the system that forms the physician's mind and heart. The same discoveries that drive personalized medicine must now inform personalized education. Each learner, like each patient, is neurobiologically and emotionally distinct. The *Decade of the Brain* [8–9] and Howard Gardner's theory of *multiple intelligences* [15–16] show how individuals differ in cognition, creativity, and motivation. Learning, neuroscience now shows, is not a passive absorption of information but an active, emotionally charged, and socially embedded process.

However, the dominant model of medical training—rooted in apprenticeship, hierarchy, and passive lectures

remains anchored in a factory paradigm: standardized input, standardized output. It values uniformity over individuality, efficiency over empathy. Such an approach fails both the learner and, ultimately, the patient [17]. In contrast, active student-centered, outcome-based, and simulation-based education supports the diversity of learners, cultivates self-directed growth, and aligns with what we now know about how the brain learns. These emerging paradigms mark a necessary shift from teaching as transmission to learning as transformation [18–19].

The challenge before us, therefore, is to synthesize science and humanity, not to choose between them. Evidence-based medicine must be completed, not contradicted by personalized medicine. Teacher-centered education must be completed, not abandoned by personalized education. This synthesis restores balance between precision and compassion, data and wisdom, algorithm and empathy [19–20].

The coming paradigm shift asks medicine to see the patient as a person and education to see the student as a learner with unique potential. Success should no longer be measured by metrics alone but by meaning: moments of genuine understanding, connection, and healing. The future of medicine will not be built solely on more data, but on deeper wisdom on how we teach, how we listen, and how we choose to care.

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