

## Why Medical Teachers Become Examiners

Doctors sometimes join teaching medical colleges as faculty/teaching staff. Though they are designated as medical teachers, they are basically clinicians (in clinical subjects) involved with patient care. In a small part of their working time, they teach medical students. Since evaluation is a part of the teaching process, they have to assess the knowledge and skills of their students too. Thus the primary reason for becoming examiners is that it is a part of their job.

However it is not necessary that everyone does his/her job conscientiously. It is perfectly possible for one to refuse to be an examiner, provided he/she gives a plausible reason for the refusal. Then what drives these doctor-teachers to be examiners?

One possibility is that some of them love their jobs, and hence become examiners. They feel that they must check and confirm that medical students are worthy of becoming doctors and being let loose on unsuspecting masses for practicing their art. They feel they must stop those who will prove dangerous to the society. We sincerely hope that a majority of the doctor-teachers belong to this category.

There are some who do it for money. There is a princely sum of Rs.5/- (about \$ 0.1 US) for checking the answer-book of one candidate, and an equal amount for examining one candidate in the practical examination. Some examiners might be more ambitious and desire greater sums for this work. They are said to be paid directly by the parents of ambitious students for getting better marks. This probably is true in some cases, judging from newspaper reports of such events. For those who cannot read our minds, we state that we wholeheartedly condemn the latter method of making money.

Some of them do it for feeling like God. They associate being an examiner with having a lot of power. For the duration of the examination they have the power to make or break the future of doctors-to-be. The idea that they hold the key to the future of many human beings gives them a heady feeling. It is like being next to God, if not God Himself. So long as they remain happy with the feeling and do not actually play God, we do not mind.

Some of them do it for developing goodwill. A number of people contact them before the examination, asking them to give better marks to the wards of those people. These people then owe the examiners, who can (and do) ask for return of these obligations in future. For the benefit of our readers who still cannot read our minds, we state that we wholeheartedly condemn this practice.

Some of them consider this a break from the routine. They go to another place as external examiners, and enjoy the hospitality of the local examiners in the form of free food, drinks, and sight-seeing. The local examiners do it probably to keep the external examiners happy, so that the candidates get better marks. Some examiners make outrageous demands and get themselves pampered. We look down upon such a practice. Some of them use this opportunity to play a psychological game with the local examiners. The aim is to prove their superiority over the co-examiners. When a candidate gives a dangerously wrong answer, they exclaim, 'Oh, is that how you treat your patients here? We are quite backward back home. We do ..... (state the right form of treatment here).' Since they speak to the candidates, the local examiners cannot speak in between to set the matters right. They are shown to be inferior without a chance to defend or fight back. We consider this a malicious game and despise it.

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A number of them do it because the University threatens to take disciplinary action against them if they don't. They are those who allow others to walk all over them. We feel sorry for them.

Some of them do it for prestige. They feel that being an examiner is a great achievement, and that it improves their CV quite a lot. They even put it in their CV in bold letters. We pity them.