Crossing international frontiers: A medical student's perspective on the London international youth science forum 2006

With developments in medical science progressing at breakneck speed, the need for international and interdisciplinary exchange of information has become imperative. Encouraging such an exchange at the undergraduate level is advantageous, especially at a period in our education when attitudes and opinions towards modern science and research are taking shape. In such a setting, I was privileged to represent India at the London International Youth Science Forum 2006, a befitting platform for promoting such an interaction between nearly 250 interdisciplinary undergraduate science students, from over 60 countries.

The two week-long forum provided students with an opportunity to interact with each other and experience the nuances of modern science through specialized lectures, lecture-demonstrations and visits to scientific establishments like hospitals, research centers and laboratories. We were also able to gain some knowledge about the lifestyle, education and government policies in different countries. It was noteworthy that the selected students were given an opportunity to present their research work, which helped them to channelize their ideas through an appropriate forum. It also provided a fertile ground for the possibility of multicentric and inter-departmental research coordination.

We also felt that the incorporation of ancillary courses such as philosophy and linguistics into science or a primer course in engineering or molecular biology into mainstream medicine, would certainly help medical students develop a holistic approach and help them contribute more effectively to modern science. With cutting-edge technology rapidly becoming an integral part of diagnostics and therapeutics, such an interdisciplinary integration would definitely help in the development of an all-round clinician.

Most participants at the forum were winners of national science fairs, where they had put their original theories into action. As scientists and healers of the future, an experience of this nature coupled with a strong academic background would surely help us to tackle the challenges of the future objectively.

Kulkarni HS
Undergraduate Medical Student,
Seth GS Medical College and KEM Hospital,
Parel, Mumbai - 400 012, India.
E-mail: hskulkarni@gmail.com