

How do we teach military medicine to our medical cadets to be military physicians

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“...At first, armed force needed to enroll military doctor for military hospital and armed forces duties. But when they enrolled, no one applied to be. And why no one applied, assume that to be a military doctor is exhausted. To be a doctor is already exhausted in curing and helping every patient, even in or out office hour. Beside, to be a military doctor need to do active duties in battle field that may risk and lose his life. Additional, military doctor working anywhere may receive an inadequate equipment, salary and small opportunity to study abroad. So no one wants to be a military doctor. But it's still necessary to have a military medical school...”

This is a part of his majesty King Bhumibol's speech that show his concern about the importance and necessity to have military doctors and that was the beginning of foundation of Phramongkutklao College of Medicine which is the only academy in Thailand that produces graduated military doctors. Our college also develop a subject of military medicine in the curriculum since founded and the subject is improved continuously till now in order to make the cadets ready to be military doctors and work effectively to serve military agencies, soldiers' families and people, specially, in crises situation such as, conflicts, accidents and disaster. The medical services in situations like these have limitations in time, places, environment, equipment, personnel and safety that need to be adapted and applied to maintain the standard of best practice that we call “good medicine in bad place”.

The developing of military medicine curriculum included setting up theoretical section, practical part and field exercises and integrating medical subjects determined by Thai Medical Councils with subjects of military science and military medicine. In 2003, subjects of military contingency medicine and field exercise called “Petchravut Operation” were developed and added in the curriculum.

Subjects and trainings in Military Medicine Curriculum include;

2nd year cadet; Ideology, soldier's custom and code of conduct, military science, weaponry, leaderships, basic training to develop soldier personality.

3rd year cadet; Basic combat training and field tactics, field survival, physical readiness training, basic field medic including triage, first aids and transfer.

4th and 5th year cadet; Military preventive medicine including disease surveillance, investigation and control, sanitation, preventive medical planning and health promotion - Military applied physiology, underwater medicine, aviation medicine, military occupational medicine and nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) warfare defense.

6th year cadet; Military contingency medicine and Operation Petchravut field exercise that integrates medical subjects with military operation. Subjects include advanced trauma life support,

advanced cardiac life support, mass casualty management, unit and division level medical support in military operation, disaster management and humanitarian assistance, incident command system, search and rescue operation, disaster victim identification. The trainings of every subject are arranged in lectures, topic discussions, top-table exercises and field exercises.

1 Petchravut operation field exercise

This field exercise is the heart of the military medicine curriculum of 6th year or final year medical cadet.

2 The purposes of the exercise include

2.1 To have medical cadets gain their knowledge and experience and understand doctrines of medical service support in the battle field and in various crises and be able to coordinate and work with other organizations and agencies effectively.

2.2 To have medical cadets gain their leadership and be able to command medical units effectively.

2.3 To have medical cadets effectively integrate knowledge in medicine, military medicine, military subjects and tactics together in providing medical care.

Petchravut operation is a 72 hour--continuous field exercise of unit and division level medical service support in various simulated scenarios including scenarios of operations in Southern border provinces of Thailand, oversea operation, operation other than war, NBC warfare defense. This exercise requires cadets with full physical fitness that need to pass standard physical test before attending the exercise.

The cadets have to set up battalion aid station and division aid station and they'll be trained to do first aid and manage casualties from various situations, such as, NBC warfare situation, mass casualty situation and also trained to do various types of evacuation including ambulance and helicopter. They also learn working in a mobile surgical truck, providing humanitarian assistance and coordination with media and reporters. They will be trained to lead medical units and throughout the exercise, they will be evaluated their leading performance and medical performance.

Phramongkutklao College of Medicine has developed and carries on improving the curriculum of military medicine to follow policies and doctrines of Royal Thai Army and Royal Thai Army Medical Department and serve national strategy, concerning changes of the nation and the world in order to produce not only precious military doctors but most of all, doctors who devote themselves with full competency to preserve the fighting force and safe soldiers' life in battle field and protect our nation. And doctors who provide medical care to all people not limit by nationalities or races to maintain impartial humanity for everyone.