

A Glance to History

History of Baghdad Medical college

During 1921 the idea of establishing a medical college in Baghdad was suggested. the first one to think of this subject was colonel (lane), the director of civilian health office in Baghdad , who recognized the deteriorated health conditions and care in Iraq following the invasion of Iraq by the British troops and he realized the importance of establishing medical teaching institutes in this country

At that time Baghdad medical society took to the idea with enthusiasm and discussions on this subject was opened with different opinions with or against.

In june 1921, Baghdad medical society called for a special meeting in quarantine hospital in Baghdad to discuss the project comprehensively .

It was attended by nine nationl Iraqi doctors who had returned to the country freshly graduated from medical institutions of Europe , in addition to 31 british doctors already working in Baghdad . during the meeting major hex gave a talk about the importance to start medical teaching in iraq because of the limited number of iraqi ictors and the prevalence of diseases and epidemics . he suggested asum of 700000 Ruppi to cover the expenses of this project .

after comprehensive discussions, all the participants agreed to send an appeal to the secretary of king faisel the firstand the prime minister abdul rhaman al nakeeb .

theappeal stressed on the followings:

1. the medical teaching in iraq is vital or the people as it is an urgent pulic need .
2. the est way toachieve such an aim is to establish a medcl school in Baghdad emmediately .
3. the required teaching hospital was already there and al ewas needed was a small building for the administration of the college .
4. the society and people must persuade the government that the project
5. would be vital for the wellbeing and protion of the country .
6. the project must be a combined work between the ministry of health and the ministry of education .

Copies of these proposals were sent to the prime minister and the secretary of king saisel , mr conwallis . the king , after discussing the matter with his close consultants, namely mr satia al husri,

declared that although his majesty shared the medical society the ideas in establishing the medical school and its vital need , but he thought that it is too early because of the low standard of teaching in secondary schools to an extent that it seemed impossible to prepare efficient medical students in the near future .

The project was dismissed and all the efforts were hampered because of the obstacles in the financial support, lack of man power and the problem of the teaching language.

People like satia Al Husri who was against British policies and considers their ideas as against the Arab soul, advised king faisel that it is better to send the students to study medicine in Europe.

However the King declared that he was convinced with the opinion of Baghdad medical society to establish a medical college in Baghdad for its immense need but he thought that the subject should be postponed for the above reasons.

In 1925 and during al saadoon government, Baghdad medical society tried again to establish the college. after prolonged discussion with the minister of internal affairs Rhasheed Ali Al Gailani as the directory of health was attached at that time to the ministry of internal affairs, he was convinced to push this project forward and the ministry of education started to promote the curriculum of the secondary schools in order to match the requirement of medical study especially English language and chemistry.

In 1925, the institute of health reached to a conclusion that it is vital to have a medical school. The ministry of education announced the possibility of establishing the medical school. In 1925 the prime minister ordered a ministers concerned and the ministry of construction to cooperate for the finalization of the details of establishing the medical school.

The directorate of health started the preparations for establishment of the medical school by sending well qualified Iraqi doctors to the medical institutes in England for further training to prepare them for teaching in the future.

Dr. Saieb Sawkat and Dr. Tawfeek Rhasheed went to England n 1926, Dr. Shawkat Al Zahawi in 1927, followed by Dr. Hashim Al Witry and Shaker Al Sweedy in 1928.

On November 6th 1926 the king ordered the prime minister to establish the medical school and a special budgetof 72230 was assigned in 1927 approve by the council of ministers.

Finally his majesty the king ordered the establishment of medical college under the name (Iraqi medical college) which was assigned in the official Iraqi journal under the number 580 of 1927.

At the same time Dr. Sanderson was elected to be the first dean of the college.

Dr. Sanderson was a British doctor from Scotland who came with the British troops on 1918. He was also special doctors of king faisel and remained royal family's doctors until he left Iraq in 1946.

Two gynecological wards (10th and 11th) were renovated to become teaching halls for anatomy , physics and biology . a small room on the left side of the entrance of the

hall was used as the dean's office with his first secretary Mr. Hasseeb Kallo .

At the same time the construction of a new building for the college started.

On 29th of November 1927 the college opened as a branch in Al Al Bait University and the students began talking their lessons in a special wing in the royal hospital that was used previously by the military medical services which was moved to the new military hospital in Hinaidi camp.

During the first year only 20 students were elected o study in the college, unfortunately many of them left the college and only 10 graduated in 1932.

The first group of teachers included Dr. Norman and Dr. Kokail for biology, Mr. Basait for organic chemistry and physics, and Mr. Woodman and Dr. Saieb Shawket for anatomy.

During the first year a special symbol for the college was hosen that included the two rivers of Iraq marked by an Assyrian bull and I center an opened book with an snake . In 1928 the royal crown was added.

Also in 1928 the college began publishing its

journal (journal of the royal Iraqi faculty of medicine).

In 1930 the new building of the college was opened by the king himself.

At fist the duration of the course was 5 years, but in 1935 it became 6 years. The official teaching language was Arabic unless the college council considered the English language at the beginning if each year, a tradition that had continued until today.

The king visited the college regularly and showed much interst in the progress of requirements and gave instructions to help the college to perform the best.

In 1932 the first group of Iraqi doctors graduated form the college, the most pominant among them was Dr. Ali Albeer and Dr. Muthafer Alzahawi .

Many graduates were sent to England and America or higher qualification to return back joins the teaching staff of the college.

The best Known of the deans who helped in the establishment of the college and its prgress were Dr. Sanderson, Dr. Saieb Shawket , Dr.Hana Khayat and Hashim AlWitry.

The first teachers who participated in the establishment and evolution of the college were Dr. Hiker (public health and communicable diseases), Dr. Woodman (surgery), Dr. Spencer (ophthalmology), Dr. Miles and Dr. Shawaket Alzahawi (pathology) and Dr. Kennedy (gynecology and obstetrics).