

Listing of the Affective Domain in the AETCOM Module: An Issue Requiring Attention from the National Medical Commission of India



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The Attitudes, Ethics, and Communication (AETCOM) module¹ was published in 2018 by the Medical Council of India (MCI) and later also adopted by the National Medical Commission (NMC) in the Competency-based Medical Education (CBME) curriculum. The inclusion of AETCOM skills in medical education is vital in India to cultivate compassionate, ethical, and patient-centered healthcare professionals who can build trust and effectively address the sociocultural complexities of the healthcare system.²⁻⁴ This was a praiseworthy attempt by the regulators of medical education in the country, NMC, to include the affective domain by listing core competencies which need to be addressed in the undergraduate training such as communicating with patients, professionalism, and ethics, among others. The AETCOM module has been created as a roadmap to help instructors and institutions construct a long-term program that will assist students in developing the requisite communication, ethical, and attitude skills. It provides a framework for the competencies that students need to master.¹ Appendix 1 of the AETCOM module (pages 78–84) lists the core and noncore competencies with the primary domain and the level to which the competency in question should be attained. There are 39 core and 15 noncore

competencies listed in this appendix. Out of the 39 core competencies, 21 are in the knowledge (cognitive) domain and 18 are in the skills (psychomotor) domain; out of the 15 noncore competencies, 5 are in knowledge and 10 are in the skills domain. Not a single competency is listed under the affective domain. All the competencies such as empathy, altruism, commitment to lifelong learning, or scholarship are listed under knowledge or skills. In a module that is almost entirely focused on the affective domain, not listing a single competency under the affective domain is a major *faux pas* and the NMC should address this at once since choosing the appropriate teaching-learning methods for a given competency to be taught and assessed depends largely on correctly identifying the educational domain.⁵ It is concerning to observe that certain significant oversights have persisted without rectification, even 6 years after the publication of the AETCOM module and addressing them would greatly enhance its impact.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Appendix 1 is available online at the journal website. https://www.nmc.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/AETCOM_book.pdf

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