

Why examiners should not forget to be decent human beings

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This is from an email that I received last month from a Diplomate National Board (DNB) student. Among other things, he said *"it is really a very pathetic state when results are out anytime, with complete washout of candidates in some cities and a overall pass percentage of around 20-25% max"*. He then highlighted how passing the DNB examinations has become a game of "chance" and was hoping that the central bodies might do something about this. Last year, a letter, literally a "cry for help" was circulated among many of the office-bearers of the Indian Radiology and Imaging Association (IRIA) by one of the DNB students who had failed around four times.

The DNB issue cropped up for the first time in one of the Central Council meetings of the IRIA during the National Conference in Mumbai. Most of the office-bearers were of the opinion that in the end it is an examination that tests the mettle of the students and it does not make sense for the IRIA to get involved. Although it is true that an MD or DMRD University examination is far simpler than a DNB exam, the general thinking was that even if difficult, in the end it is an examination and students must work hard for it.

I am not sure if the IRIA can do anything about the DNB process, and the onus will always remain on the students to handle the DNB and its issues.

However, there is one place where the IRIA perhaps could do something.

One of the issues constantly highlighted by the students is the maliciousness of some of the examiners who go out of their way to insult students and to demotivate them. Everyone knows who these examiners are and the centers where this happens. Most of them are IRIA members as well.

Malignant examiners are also known during University examinations. However, if one internal examiner is bad, the others balance him/her out and if the external examiner is a terror, the internal examiner usually manages to smoothen things out.

In DNB examinations, this is not possible and hence the students are entirely at the mercy of the examiners without any support, especially when the examiners behave badly. This misbehavior of the examiners can destroy whatever little confidence the students may have had and can then lead to significant stress in the days to come and in subsequent examinations.

Since most of these examiners are IRIA members, we within the IRIA could request them on a personal level to be nice. The examiners should learn that there is absolutely no need to vent their frustration on students...there are other avenues and people available for that.

And examiners need to remember that what goes around, comes around! The students will not forget these insults and barbs. And, as has happened to "terrors" in the past, it is very possible that after retirement, these examiners who usually have no sympathy among their former students will be summarily consigned to the dustbin of history.

I repeat! Passing or not passing a student is entirely the onus of the examiner based on the student's performance. But the least he/she can do is try and be a decent human being whatever he/she may think of the student and his/her ability.

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