

## A mistake in finding minimum value in quadratic function

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### Question

- (a) Find the maximum value of  $1 - 4x - 4x^2$ .
- (b) Hence deduce the minimum value of  $2 - \frac{3}{4x^2 + 4x - 1}$ .

**"Solution"** (taken from *New Way Mathematics Book 1 P.70, Practice 19 Teacher Edition*)

$$(a) \quad 1 - 4x - 4x^2 = -4\left(x^2 + x - \frac{1}{4}\right) = -4\left[x^2 + x + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 - \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{4}\right] = -4\left[\left(x + \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 - \frac{1}{2}\right] = -4\left(x + \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + 2$$

Since  $-4\left(x + \frac{1}{2}\right)^2 \leq 0$  for all real values of  $x$ ,  $1 - 4x - 4x^2$  has the max. value of  $2$ , when  $x = -\frac{1}{2}$ .

- (b)  $2 - \frac{3}{4x^2 + 4x - 1} = 2 + \frac{3}{1 - 4x - 4x^2}$  has the minimum value when the denominator of  $\frac{3}{1 - 4x - 4x^2}$  has a maximum value  $2$ .

$$\therefore \text{The minimum value} = 2 + \frac{3}{2} = \frac{7}{2}$$

### Analysis

$f(x) = 1 - 4x - 4x^2$  of has a max. of  $2$  does not imply  $g(x) = \frac{1}{1 - 4x - 4x^2}$  has a min. value of  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Let the roots of  $f(x) = 0$  be  $\alpha = \frac{-1 - \sqrt{2}}{2}$ ,  $\beta = \frac{-1 + \sqrt{2}}{2}$ .

It can be seen that from the diagram on the right,

- (1)  $f(x) \geq 0$  if  $\alpha \leq x \leq \beta$ .
- (2)  $f(x) < 0$  if  $x < \alpha$  or  $x > \beta$ .

Since  $g(x) = \frac{1}{f(x)}$ ,

- (1)  $g(x) > 0$  if  $\alpha < x < \beta$ .
- (2)  $g(x) < 0$  if  $x < \alpha$  or  $x > \beta$ .
- (3)  $g(x)$  is undefined if  $x = \alpha$  or  $x = \beta$ .

$g(x)$  has only a local min. of  $\frac{1}{2}$  when  $x = -\frac{1}{2}$ .

$g(x)$  can be any negative value if  $x < \alpha$  or  $x > \beta$ .

The graph of  $h(x) = 2 - \frac{3}{4x^2 + 4x - 1}$  is shown on the right diagram.

- (1)  $h(x)$  has a local min. of  $\frac{7}{2}$  when  $x = -\frac{1}{2}$ .
- (2)  $h(x) < 2$  if  $x < \alpha$  or  $x > \beta$ .

