

## Post-fellowship training: need for a structured program

Long, Donlin M has written that, the goal of all graduate medical education is to ensure that the graduating physician is competent to practice in his or her chosen field of medicine. The evaluation of a resident's competency to practice, however, has never been clearly defined, nor has the fixed period of time given for residency training in each specialty been shown to be the right amount of time for each individual resident to achieve competency.<sup>1</sup>

We have to honestly think whether our fellowship training program is comprehensive enough to create surgeons and physicians capable enough to start practicing on their own once they have passed their examinations. As medicine is a field that is continuously evaluating and young fellows most often lack skills in one or other area. It is well known fact that in four or five years one cannot learn every aspect of surgery or medicine and definitely need continuing supervision or better to say support from senior colleagues before one can confidently start independent practice. Especially minimally invasive surgery which has a steep learning curve is the most affected area of training. Nussbaum has mentioned in his study that currently, general surgery training programs as a whole are failing to provide residents with significant surgical experience in advanced laparoscopic procedures.<sup>2</sup> Lack of standardization at residency level make one suffer at post fellowship levels although College of Physician

and Surgeon Pakistan has given guidelines for standard training protocols but most training institutes change these guidelines according to their internal policies.

In our country very few opportunities are available for large number of fellows passing their examinations, also these posts are not training posts mostly not even defined in majority of institutions. The result is that most people are working either independently or at posts which are beyond their set of skills enforcing them to restrict themselves at a particular level of health care provision, this makes them suffer as their professional development is halted at a certain level and in this way many people who are capable enough to do wonders in medical science are lost in this path. Only few people who have resources and get opportunity enter in post fellowship training slots abroad and most of them settle there. In this way we are losing cream of our nation. It is shameful to see that even after 64 years of independence we fail to produce super specialists.

Another problem is lack of jobs and underpaid jobs which actually push a practitioner to work him or herself out in order to make both ends meet.

The only solution to this problem in my opinion is to properly design a post fellowship training program which is competence based

training in different specialities, subspecialities and superspecialities. Posts should be properly defined in all postgraduate institutes so that our new fellows get equal opportunity to groom themselves in all aspects in their areas of interest. Also they should be given handsome remuneration packages to get financial burden off their mind and allow them to get training in a peaceful state. This is in my opinion only way we will get scholars and thorough professional and will increase level of health care in our society.

In this regard College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan as well as other societies are requested to take a step ahead in designing

and implementing a structured post fellowship training program with same non biased assessment techniques which is being used for residency level.

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### **References:**

1. Long, Donlin M "Competency-based Residency Training: The Next Advance in Graduate Medical Education" *Academic Medicine*:December 2000 - Volume 75 - Issue 12 - p 1178-1183.
2. Michael S. Nussbaum "Surgical Endoscopy Training is Integral to General Surgery Residency and Should Be Integrated Into Residency and Fellowships Abandoned"*SURG INNOV* December 2002 9: 212-215.