EDITORIAL

CAREER ORIENTATION IN MEDICAL PROFESSION

The 21st century is witnessing remarkable revolu-
tions and changes in the primitive trends globally in
every field. The medical profession is no exception but
in our part of the world, some conventions still prevail
and are rigid enough to modify. It is being observed that
the majority of medical graduates opt for post-graduate
training in the major fields of medicine, surgery, paediat-
rics and gynaecology / obstetrics, whereas training slots
in other specialties, both clinical and basic sciences, are
either under-filled or left fully un-occupied. There is a
dire need to explore the reasons for this biased attitude
of medical graduates towards different specialties.

Over flow of trainees in a few specialties is not a
fruitful trend even for those particular specialties. Excess
of trainees causes over-saturation of the respective
departments with trainees who cannot receive due at-
tention from supervisors owing to their large numbers.
Since medical resources are limited, trainees cannot get
hands-on experience in all the major and minor proce-
dures that are expected from them at the completion of
any particular year of training. Specialties that are un-
der-filled on the other hand cannot accomplish vertical
mobility due to lack of enough human resources and
so with the passage of time they persist as conformist
fields unable to exercise latest trends.

It is these trainees who will be occupying the
clinical and supervisory posts in a decade’s time in
these same hospitals. If there are limited numbers of
trainees in minor specialties and basic sciences, it can
be foreseen that over the next decade or so, these fields
will not harvest trained mentors and teachers.

In any training institute, all the disciplines are
inter-linked because most of the patients presenting to
these institutes have already been seen at the primary
level and are complex cases that cannot be evaluated
by any single area of expertise and usually require in-
tegrated management approaches. This is the concept
that forms the basis for multi-disciplinary approach
being practiced world-wide. Now, in our set-up, if some
specialties are more established than others, how will
this multi-disciplinary approach come into action when
we do not have enough qualified staff in other fields? As
a result, the efficiency of all specialties suffers a setback.

We need to look into the reasons for this approach
of majority of the medical graduates. Most of the gradu-
ates themselves are unaware of their specialty selection
criteria. They happen to follow the trends being set by
senior colleagues; this then takes the form of a vicious
cycle which repeats every year. The societal norms,
personality idealization and mental approach also have
their role to play.

There is ominous need for career counseling
among the medical graduates who graduate from med-
ical colleges in herds every year but after graduation
they are totally unaware of their future perspectives.
They are clueless about specialty selection and fall prey
to hearsay. If they are made aware of recent trends in
all the specialties and how the world is revolutionizing
in different fields, they will be motivated to opt for other
fields also rather than sticking to conventions.

The sub-specialties, both basic and clinical sci-
ences, are much dynamic and advanced in contradic-
tion to common perception of medical graduates and a
bright future awaits those who opt for these specialties
as post-graduate trainees. Provincial Government of
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken an exemplary step by
providing lucrative monthly package to post-graduate
trainees of less attractive specialties like nephrology,
anesthesia and radiology. Similar step should also be
taken by government and medical institutes to arrange
attractive job packages for faculty members of these
specialties. This concept has worked remarkably in
the west; specialties that are under-filled or disserted
are made more attractive by offering higher salaries
and providing an academic environment that promotes
learning.

Teaching methods also need to be revised and
assistance can be taken from Khyber Medical University
and Department of Medical Education to encourage
critical thinking in students by adopting recent teaching
strategies.

All these factors if approached together will lead
to uniform improvement in medical care in all fields and
will lead to uplift in the overall practice of medicine.

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