

Editorial:

POSTGRADUATION IN CARDIOLOGY COMES TO PAKISTAN

The National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (Pakistan) has taken a step. A one year postgraduate training course in cardiology has been instituted. The pre-requisites are two year's postgraduate training in general medicine and cardiology. The programme is meant to train a general physician with a special interest in cardiology and not a sub-specialist in Cardiovascular Medicine. The reasons for instituting this course are many. The most prominent one being the great need and demand for expertise in routine clinical cardiology at the small city and town level and the fact that so far no College or Institution has instituted F.C.P.S. in subspecialities. The scope of the course started is limited insofar as not to train potential teachers of cardiology and directors of cardiac diagnostic labs, but only generalists who are well versed in ECG interpretation, chest radiography and who can intelligently select cases for further advanced work-up and can confidently take care of such cases after they have gone through specialized procedures and have had cardiac surgery. So it is intended that the reasons for keeping this course going shall be as strong after a proper F.C.P.S. (Cardiology) program is instituted as they are now. These two will serve different purposes.

While there are points for starting such a postgraduate course there are many precautions that will have to be taken into consideration. It has been seen that whenever one Institution starts a training programme other Institutions jump in with similar programmes and in their hurry forget to properly evaluate their own adequacy for instituting such postgraduate training. It is upto the P.M.D.C. to ensure that minimum standards are met. Then there are strong reasons to oppose the establishment of grades of specialists. It is likely that most candidates aspiring for such programme are more interested in adding "Heart Specialists" to their titles rather than a genuine desire to improve the lot of their patients. A solution to this problem would be not to award a title with the training and let there be no exam. This may weaken the program and make it less attractive for talented people but may be only way possible. The P.M.D.C. and affiliated University shall have a say in the final shape of things to come.

Time alone will tell how useful this level of postgraduation shall be and the manner in which it fits into the overall scheme of specialist care to evolve in our country in future. Ideally, one is either a specialist or not a specialist and there should be no in-betweens.

Editor.

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