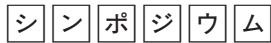


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Postgraduate Psychiatric Training in Singapore

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Singapore is a small island between the Malaysian peninsula and Indonesian Archipelago with a population of 4.8 million people. The ethnic composition is a microcosm of Asia with 3 main races/cultures in Singapore; Chinese (74.7%), Malay (13.6%) and Indian (8.9%).

Post graduate psychiatry training in Singapore is currently in transition between 3 systems. The training program is evolving from a rigid system of time-based (3 years of basic and advanced speciality training each) and phasic progression (determined by the passing of a Master of Medicine examination before progression to the advanced phase) to a competency-based and seamless progression of training (requiring only 5 years). Medical Officers were allowed to apply for traineeship after completing 1 year of internship. In the past few years there have been slots for 20 trainees a year, usually with under half of the slots being filled.

The actual training is still divided into basic and advanced training. The former consists primarily of didactic lectures that are centralised at a National level at the Institute of Mental Health on a weekly basis with decentralized supervision at the trainee's department. Advanced training is decentralized to the trainee's department and generally consists of weekly presentations and discussions.

The basic trainee is expected to complete 5-6 case write-ups and participate in home visits, occupational therapy sessions and basic psychotherapy. The advanced trainee is required to complete a thesis before sitting for his exit examination. The exit examination is the final assessment for completion of training and consists of a journal critique and vignette discussion.

This program is now being revised to an ACGME (American College of Graduate Medical Education) Residency style program set to begin in Nov 2010. This will be an integrated, seamless 5 year program beginning from internship and will have enhanced supervision, with each resident in the program being supervised by the year directly senior to him as well by a designated supervisor. This program has very strict guidelines for training and supervision and is expected to take psychiatric training in Singapore to the next level.

Adequacy of Psychiatric Training : A Singaporean Perspective

Background

The specialty training program for psychiatry in Singapore is transiting to a seamless 5 year training program. It is timely to assess the perceived adequacy of current psychiatric spe-

cialty training.

Aim and Methodology

An anonymous survey was sent out all psychiatry trainees and psychiatrists in the public sector to assess the current adequacy and perceived importance of 11 aspects of psychiatric specialist training.

Results

49% (54 of 110) of respondents replied to the survey. The current adequacy of training was less than the perceived importance of training for all 11 aspects of training. The most

important aspects of training were disorder and diagnosis, pharmacological treatment, clinical interview and treatment skills. Psychiatrists rated most aspects of training as being more important than trainees except for cultural aspects, research and basic neuroscience. Psychiatrists rated adequacy of training better than trainees except for research.

Conclusion

There were perceived deficiencies in all 11 aspects of training. Psychiatrists and trainees have different perceptions of adequacy and importance of training.
