

## Effective mentorship in health care, need of the time

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A mentor is a guide, a trusted advisor, a guru, an experienced person who aids in improving the skills, knowledge, attitude and abilities of its mentees and helps them in moving up their career ladder faster by a reciprocal learning relationship. Mentorship is vital for trainees and even professionals within the health care system, which not only includes hospitals and universities but also training organizations and regulatory bodies. It is a collaborative effort in achieving goals set during the mentoring process. Mentoring is a process where the mentor agrees to empathetically share his generous time, knowledge and skills for the success of others while positively dealing with the unrealistic expectations and imbalance of power <sup>[1]</sup>.

Despite the acceptance of positive role of mentorship, not every institute supports the mentoring needs of their trainees, researchers and students. This may be attributed to limited resources, flawed mindsets, untrained mentors and gaps in mentorship education.

A survey regarding trainee's expectations, experiences and perspectives on mentorship was conducted on the cardiothoracic surgical trainees (a United States Graduate Medical Education-accredited program). It showed that more than one-third of the residents had either no mentor or less effective mentorship or both. The major criterion for mentor selection was "easy to work and approachable" (75.9%) and the median mentorship effectiveness score was 51. More than 60% of the residents themselves did not receive any effective mentorship education <sup>[2]</sup>.

Another survey was conducted to access the attitude of orthopedics trainees towards mentorship and its socio-demographic differences in the two states of America. The results showed that more than 95% of the trainees have positive views about mentorship. They believe that mentorship played a key role in their professional

growth. Female trainees showed more interest in getting a mentor as compared to others. The trainees who were experiencing burnout were less satisfied with the quality of their mentorship. Despite the fact that trainees were highly satisfied with their mentorship programs, only two third of the training programs were offering mentorship <sup>[3]</sup>.

A study conducted to access the competence of dental healthcare professionals in mentoring trainees concluded that the students should also receive mentorship training and the competence can be improved by increasing knowledge of effective mentoring, goal oriented mentoring, motivation for mentorship and mentor characteristics <sup>[4]</sup>.

Interestingly, it was reported in the fifth annual global health 50/50 report that more than two thirds of the global governing board seats are held by high income countries while only 2.5% by the low income countries <sup>[5]</sup>. Furthermore, there is strong evidence suggesting the vital role of mentorship in cultivating future global health leaders. Therefore it is essential to provide mentorship to global health professionals in their early career stages especially from the middle and low income countries, so that they can represent their countries as global health leaders <sup>[5]</sup>.

Effective mentorship should be goal oriented, helps mentees in their professional development, impart mentee confidence, leadership skills, and problem solving abilities, expand their network and open up doors for new opportunities.

The way forward is to identify and address the race and gender based mentorship disparities, working towards easy accessibility of mentorship programs for all and prioritizing mentorship training, which truly reflects the mentee's needs and its proper delivery, should be addressed to make it more acceptable.

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