

Choice of second fellowship in dermatology

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Dermatology is no more a specialty of a few ointments and creams. During the last 2 decades the specialty has shown a rise like no other medical discipline. It has incorporated, pathology, aesthetics, lasers and surgery. In present era doing Fellowship of College of Physicians Surgeons Pakistan (FCPS) in dermatology does not seem enough for majority of young and enthusiastic dermatologists, who have the quest to gain further knowledge and skills.

Some subspecialties of dermatology are gaining significant popularity and acceptance among the dermatologists worldwide. These include dermatopathology, pediatric dermatology, aesthetics dermatology and dermatosurgery. Several sub-specialty programs are being offered worldwide, but mostly in India and USA. One-year fellowship in Pediatric dermatology is being offered in several universities.¹⁻⁵ Similarly fellowship programs and certifications in aesthetic dermatology^{1,6,7}; Dermatosurgery^{1,6,8} and Dermatopathology^{9,10} are also available internationally. Except dermatopathology, other subspecialties are still in the developmental phase regarding their standard curricula, training requirements and certifications.

College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan has always taken a lead in introduction of several

subspecialty diplomas for the first time in the country, and the college authorities are very supportive in introduction of new subspecialties. However, there are some administrative, and academic requirements associated with it. These requirements include nomination of training institutes for subspecialty training, at least one in north and one in south of the country, with availability of complete infrastructure and equipment required for that discipline. Second requirement is the availability of supervisors and examiners in the respective disciplines in the designated centers. Third is the development of curriculum and preparation of 500 quality MCQs and 10-15 TOACS stations. This is indeed a daunting task that needs a combined effort of all the senior dermatologists of the country.

Over the last 3 years the faculty of dermatology of College of Physicians and Surgeons, has worked on the development of FCPS program in pediatric dermatology, dermatopathology and dermatosurgery, but unfortunately none of the program could reach to completion due to inability to meet the college criteria to start subspecialty programs. The maximum efforts and time have been devoted to Pediatric Dermatology and maximum progress has been made in this discipline, but there is a constant criticism by the FCPS trainees in dermatology, that this subspecialty is not in popular demand and they want FCPS Dermatosurgery, to be introduced before any other subspecialty program.

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Table 1 Survey on choice of second fellowship in dermatology (n=206).

S. No.	Department	DS	DP	PD	Total
1.	Military Hospital, Rawalpindi	22	5	2	29
2.	Allied Hospital, Faisalabad	13	5	1	19
3.	Hayatabad Medical Complex, Peshawar	11	2	3	16
4.	Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar	9	4	3	16
5.	Gujranwala Medical College, Gujranwala	2	-	-	2
6.	Ganga Ram Hospital, Lahore	9	4	1	14
7.	Jinnah Hospital, Lahore	21	2	7	30
8.	Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Center, Karachi	7	4	-	11
9.	Combined Military Hospital, Peshawar	6	2	-	8
10.	Mao Hospital, Lahore	17	1	2	20
11.	Services Hospital, Lahore	8	2	6	16
12.	Bolan Medical College, Quetta	8	1	3	12
13.	Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro	10	1	2	13
Total		143 (69.4%)	33 (16.0%)	30 (14.6%)	206 (100%)

DP: Dermatopathology, DS: dermatosurgery, PD: pediatric dermatology

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned facts a brief survey was conducted in 13 teaching institutes of the country where training for FCPS dermatology is being conducted. The study population was FCPS dermatology trainees.

There was only one survey question, "If given a choice to do subspecialty FCPS, after clearing your FCPS dermatology, what will be your first choice?" **Table 1** shows the teaching departments, and frequency of the trainees' choice for Dermatosurgery, Dermatopathology and Pediatric Dermatology.

As obvious from the table above, maximum number of FCPS (Dermatology) trainees would like to take up dermatosurgery as their first choice of subspecialty FCPS (69.4%). After that the choice among Dermatopathology and Pediatric dermatology was 16 and 14%, respectively.

Hence it is recommended that the faculty of dermatology must plan the introduction of subspecialty FCPS in accordance to the dermatology trainees' choice and demand.

References

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