



## MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AMONG MEDICOS: A CONTINUUM BEYOND ACADEMICS

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### KEYWORDS :

Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development usually by a face-to-face communication and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the mentee)[1].

Standing Committee on Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education (SCOPME) describes mentorship for doctors as "a process whereby an experienced, highly regarded, empathetic person (the mentor) guides another (usually younger) individual (the mentee) in the development and re-examination of their own ideas, learning, and personal and professional development. The mentor, who often (but not necessarily) works in the same organization or field as the mentee, achieves this by listening or talking in confidence to the mentee." [2] Mentorship comprises of 5 stages: contemplation, initiation, growth and maintenance, decline and dissolution and redefinition.[3]

**Contemplation :** During this stage, interested parties learn about the program and determine whether it is a good fit. They begin to picture themselves in the role of mentor or mentee and decide if they want to proceed.

**Initiation:** This involves applying the mentoring program, completing screening and training and finally being matched with a mentor or mentee. It is also called as the "courtship" or "fantasy" stage.

**Growth and maintenance:** The relationship develops and matures. Mentors and mentees become more comfortable with each other and may start sharing personal information or talking about topics that are deeper than what they discussed early in the match.

**Decline and dissolution:** The mentoring relationship ultimately comes to an end. It can either be a pre defined closure or a premature one. Regardless of when or why closure occurs, it is important to concentrate on a positive and healthy closure.

**Redefinition:** Redefinition is the final stage of any formal mentoring relationship. This is the time where the mentor and mentee determine what is next for the match i.e - Complete closure, Continuation of the match, Continuing the relationship outside the program or Mentor - Mentee rematch.

**History of mentorship in India:** Mentorship in education is existent in India since centuries when education along with basic life skills were taught by saintly scholars (Sage)/Guru in Ashram. Guru would remain as a lifelong teacher for that particular student. Though "mentorship in modern medicine" is relatively a new terminology this phenomenon is in practice

since many years.[4]

In USA mentoring was developed in the 1970s for large private-sector corporations to support needy staff. Mentoring programs have been introduced in medical professions since 1990s.[5]

#### Changing scenario of mentorship in India:

In early and mid 19th century most medical colleges in India were running undergraduate courses. Mentorship was mainly focused on academic issues. Teachers and senior students would serve the purpose of mentors for the new students (mentee). With the advent of postgraduate study in the medical colleges' mentorship propelled in real sense. In India postgraduate students learn subject under the guidance of teachers they work in the respective subject for a minimum period of 3 years. During this period of training, student - teacher bond goes beyond academics and teachers start looking after their students as parent, friend, motivator & philosopher. At this point of training teacher actually mentors his or her student in the true sense. In India mentorship during under-graduation is not the same as post graduation in terms of professional closeness due to several factors. Training of under graduate students in medical colleges is mostly restricted to academics. Students interact with the teachers on non-academic issues during annual cultural gathering and proportion of extracurricular activities in medical colleges are decreasing these days. In last 5-10 years many medical colleges and universities are giving emphasis on mentorship program for the medical students.

**Rationality:** Mentoring program in medical schools exist to provide support to students and guidance that contribute to a fulfilling undergraduate medical experience.[6] First-year medical students come from a secure environment of the school with less number of students in each class, having spent time with the students of the same social and cultural backgrounds. When they enter a medical college, they get lost in the crowd with too many students in the same class coming from different backgrounds; these students face stress of complex medical course, peer pressure, and emotional immaturity. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to intervene and introduce mentorship program to this vulnerable group. [7] This program facilitates the students in academic pursuit and provides them a way to cope up with the difficulties faced in new environment. [8] College is the second home for the students and teachers have to play multiple roles to meet the needs of the students. Mentorship is important during all the years of training but it matters the most during first year of the college. During first year students are apprehensive about the studies, vast curriculum, new environment and senior students.[4] Considering this MCI has also introduced this mentorship program in its new competency based MBBS curriculum from 2019. The objectives of this program would be to create an environment of mutual trust between faculty and students, to encourage interaction among students and

dissipate peer pressure, help students to efficiently manage their personal issues and interpersonal relationships and to reduce stress and depression among medicos.

A CME was organized and conducted in Dumka Medical College, Dumka, Jharkhand by department of community medicine to introduce this program to the 1<sup>st</sup> batch of MBBS students for 1 hour duration. It was attended by 82 students and 27 faculty members from various departments.

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