



## Pathology Residency Training Programs: Still A Work in Progress

### KEYWORDS

\* Dr. Bageshri Gogate

MD Pathology, Associate Professor, Department of Pathology, Smt. Kashibai Navale Medical College & General Hospital, Narhe, Pune, Maharashtra, India  
\* Corresponding Author

Dr. Avinash Joshi

MD Pathology, Professor & Head of Department, Department of Pathology, Smt. Kashibai Navale Medical College & General Hospital, Narhe, Pune, Maharashtra, India

Medical profession in India has developed enormously in the past few decades and the demand on the faculty of pathology has only grown. Unfortunately the training programs have not been able to keep pace with this rapid expansion in needs and skills. While there is no doubt about the need to improve the system, there exist hardly any data about what needs to be done. Some medical specialties like ophthalmology have had surveys done amongst stakeholders about what is desired from postgraduate training.<sup>[1]</sup> There have been hardly any study in the realm of pathology. The survey had demonstrated a hunger on part of residents to learn new skills but this was not matched by the training imparted to them. While certain conditions like admissions and training facilities may not be in direct control of the pathology department heads; framing curriculum, improving teaching methods and techniques, communication skills and professionalism certainly is. A survey of ophthalmology departments across government funded medical colleges had shown lacunae not in the availability of facilities, rather in their usage.<sup>[2]</sup> While newer tools like a multi head microscope to improve histopathology and cytology training may be easier, it is improving the soft systems that is the challenge.

A survey of American pathology residency training program had reported increased instruction in *pathology informatics* the branch of theory, practice and investigation of electronic information management in anatomic and clinical pathology. In many residency programs it was clubbed with management training. Since a large percentage of pathologists mind their own 'Business', teaching them financial and managerial skills along with informatics is important.

The European Union is comparable in size and (partly) population with India and has different levels of expectations and delivery in residency training programs like India. Numerous publications have called for harmonization of pathology residency training in Europe. While numerous state health universities like Rajiv Gandhi Medical University of Karnataka and Maharashtra University of Health Sciences have undertaken this role in India, other than the National Board of Examination this has been found to be wanting at the national level in India. Fellowship training is common in the western world to increase marketability and depth of knowledge by the pathology residents.<sup>[3]</sup> This trend is yet to come in Indian pathology unlike in ophthalmology and surgery.

Competency based physician education has been acknowledged as the way forward to make residency programs

more effective. The American Certification Council had looked at six basic skills which a resident should learn.<sup>[4]</sup>

A study conducted amongst young pathologists who have spent five to seven years into the specialty after postgraduate training would be a good place to start to know what it is that young professional's feel is a lacuna in their training so that we can bridge the gap.

### References :

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