

Emergency medicine foundation programme (EMFP)

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With a population of two hundred and twenty million people in Pakistan and only less than twenty fully trained Emergency Medicine (EM) Specialist.¹ We need to work hard to make EM recognized as an essential specialty within the country. The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan introduced a fellowship in Emergency Medicine since 2010^{1,2}, however, there are only ten hospitals out of 1174 recognized for their training in EM. At this pace, we need another fifty years to have trained enough EM specialists to meet demand. We should aim to have, at the minimum, a trained EM physician in every hospital in Pakistan within the next ten years. The skills required by clinicians in emergency care are different from other medical specialties and include the ability to make decisions in pressured environments, manage risk, work independently, and use initiative. Teamwork is also of great importance and forms the basis of our practice.

Emergency Medicine as a specialty is becoming increasingly recognized the world over for the benefits it can provide populations in reducing mortality and morbidity, by providing timely and effective care for patients when they need it most.³ If we are to compare from a decade ago – the nature of attendance has changed which means EM physicians need to balance their management of trauma and injuries alongside being adept at treating acute manifestations of chronic illnesses.

The Emergency Medicine Foundation Programme is a one-year curriculum that focuses on building both clinical and professional skills, through observation and evaluation in the workplace.⁴ The programme was created to be implemented early in the careers of trainees and covers common emergencies, assessment strategies,

resuscitation skills, and developing professional behaviors.

Introduced in August 2019, a cohort of thirty trainees were inducted by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM), UK. This competency-based programme includes regular webinars conducted by RCEM doctors, face-to-face teaching sessions as Rawalpindi Medical University (RMU), and access to e-portfolio and CV building tools.⁴ A ‘Train the Trainer’ programme was delivered beforehand through workshops, webinars, and online training. This was a vital part of our effort as we recognize true skill only comes through experience; incorporating feedback and reflection. The skill of a senior clinician is largely due to their experience and their ability to judge situations, utilizing best practice in the context of often complex presentations. However, expertise does not develop solely from experience but relies on the clinician to incorporate feedback, review, and adaptive behavior as well as maintain their existing knowledge. Developing the emergency medicine service in this way will improve job satisfaction, the quality of care delivered to patients, and the ability of clinicians to keep learning throughout their careers.^{5,6}

This year, we plan to start the Emergency Medicine Foundation Programme (EMFP) at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences. We hope that by the end of next year we will have a trained workforce in the Emergency Department of PIMS. These trained doctors will initially assess and manage patients in the Emergency Department (ED). Beyond this year, we will use the information from our evaluation to improve and adjust the curriculum delivery and to expand this work to other hospital sites.

Some of these trainees will be coming to the UK for further training for two years in Emergency Medicine after successfully completing one year of EMFP. They will benefit from working in a new environment and learn skills and practices that would usually not be available to them. We believe that developing the emergency medicine service in this way will improve job satisfaction, the caliber of care delivered to patients, and the ability of clinicians to build their skills as part of life-long learning and development.

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