



How can H-Net improve the education of hematologists in Europe?

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The European Hematology Association (EHA) and the national societies of hematology in Europe have developed the European Curriculum Passport ("passport") with the help of an EU grant. This passport is currently used in many European countries as a complement to earlier existing documents that specify the requirements for obtaining a specialist degree in hematology. Eva Hellström-Lindberg from Stockholm is president of the EHA Curriculum Committee; vice president is Laurent Degos from Paris.

The initial work that went into the development of the passport produced a lot of information regarding the education of hematologists in different parts of Europe. For example, the length of specialist training varies from four to eight years, and for every million inhabitants the yearly number of specialists that complete hematology specialty training varies between 0,2 and 4. It was also clear that further work was needed in order to assess the applicability of the passport, and how to best discover and address knowledge gaps in different countries. For these reasons a new EU application was submitted that was granted in 2008. With the help of this EU grant, hematology associations all over Europe have created a European Network for Harmonization of Training in Hematology (H-Net), with the aim of strengthening specialist training in hematology and improve mobility of physicians with Europe.

Competency survey

H-Net has launched an internet-based survey among younger hematologists who have finished their training within the last 5 years. The main goal of this survey is to investigate if the passport mirrors the actual training given in Europe, and if not, to find out which parts differ. The survey will highlight differences in specialist training between countries, as well as knowledge-gaps in different parts of Europe. The results will form the basis for a revision of the passport, and also a platform to identify educational needs both on national and European levels. Each national society will have access to their nation's results. On a European level competence gaps can be addressed through hematology tutorials and scientific workshops arranged by the EHA.

Online portfolio system for physicians in training

The passport is available in electronic form on the EHA web site. Professor Ambjörn Naeve from Uppsala University, who has developed the above mentioned survey, has also created an online portfolio system named the Hematology Portfolio. This system has similarities with sites such as MySpace. The goal of this system is to provide hematologists with information regarding educational activities that target the different goals described in the passport. The portfolio system will be available for specialists (whether in training or not) at no cost. H-Net will encourage continuous updating of the passport in order to discover knowledge gaps at an early stage. The specialist can then easily find educational opportunities that deal with the identified knowledge gap, such as courses, on-line training sessions, recommended literature etc.

Pilot European Master Class in Haematology

The most comprehensive task of H-Het is led by Dr Cheng-Hock Toh from the University of Liverpool. Along with other members of H-Net and pedagogic expertise, a pilot European master class will be created. This master class will consist of both internet-based training and face-to-face meetings, and is free of charge. The pilot project will consist of 50 specialists in training that by spring of 2011 should have approximately 6 months left of their training. The master class will focus on difficult therapeutic situations, ethical dilemmas, and clinical areas in which the survey has demonstrated widespread knowledge gaps. The master class will start with a face-to-face meeting between students and mentors at the EHA annual meeting in Barcelona in June 2010. The master class is planned to run from July 2010 to March 2011. All national societies will be asked to submit suggestions for participants from their respective countries in the autumn of 2009. The master class will be quite demanding, so national societies will be asked to name promising specialist-in-training with a well founded interest in innovative pedagogic activities.