Strengthening the training of family physicians in South Africa

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To present an overview and brief evaluation of the training provided through the EuropeAid-project and RCGP collaboration to South African family medicine clinical trainers and examiners.

Objective
Since 2007:
- Family Medicine as a new specialty
- A 4-year postgraduate training programme at all 9 medical schools
- A newly created national exit examination

South Africa’s human resource plan has an initial target of 1000 family physicians (FPs). The majority of doctors available to the PHC system have no postgraduate training or are very junior.

There is no tradition of postgraduate training in the district health services and newly qualified FPs are expected to immediately train and assess registrars.

The quality and scale of the training programmes need to be improved to ensure sufficient numbers of competent FPs.
Since March 2014: a EuropeAid-funded project commenced:
- Stellenbosch University: lead applicant

During 2014 and 2015:
- Training interventions conducted in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP).
  [The RCGP’s experience with training clinical trainers and developing national assessment is at an international standard.]
An initial cohort of 34 family medicine trainers attended two 5-day courses: August 2014 and February 2015.

Prof Julia Blitz from SU was a co-facilitator at 2nd course. In future she will lead the training in South Africa.

- Focus on the importance of assessing the learning needs of the learners.
- The emphasis was on personal educational skill development for the delegates with feedback.

Training of FM clinical trainers
• Three 1-day courses at FCFP(SA) examinations:
  May 2014, October 2014, May 2015
• Presented by RCGP assessment experts.
• Focus on training of examiners:
  – To improve their capacity to provide higher quality questions for the national exam (multiple choice, modified essay, critical appraisal, OSCE stations)
  – To assess clinical skills more consistently and accurately

Training of FM examiners
Themes from RCGP reports

Clinical teaching
- Establish and sustain a Community of practice
- Development of teaching skills for workplace
- Benchmarking of standards

College exam
- Standard setting
- Assessment design principles
- Blueprinting
- Reliability and validity of clinical exam
- Item writing groups: MCQ, MEQ, OSCE

Develop a South African version of the course
Way forward: the THET project - Strengthening primary health care through primary care doctors and family physicians

1. The development of a critical mass of clinical trainers who have a deeper understanding of their educational role and enhanced capability.

2. The establishment of an ongoing short course for new clinical trainers that will in future be facilitated by South Africans.

3. The conceptualisation of a process of initial and ongoing accreditation for clinical trainers and establishment of a sub-group/society of clinical trainers within the SAAFP.

4. The establishment of a national exit examination that is comparable to an international standard and which helps to ensure the quality of graduating FPs for the country.
Thank you!
Baie dankie!
Enkosi kakhulu!

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