

INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE TRAINING IN MEDICINE: MARKING 20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

TAL SHAHAR & ALISON YADAN

The Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University is the largest teaching hospital in the country and is proud to be one of Israel's leading health science teaching institutions. Since its establishment in 1964, the goals of the Faculty have been excellence in medical education and medical care, combined with a broad approach to health problems. The Faculty has had a profound influence on the country's health standards through the academic supervision of seven teaching general hospitals, as well as rehabilitation centers and psychiatric institutions, which together serve over 40% of Israel's population. The medical facilities affiliated with the Sackler Faculty of Medicine offer healthcare services to a diverse population from different ethnic origins, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic levels.

THE INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE TRAINING IN MEDICINE

In 1988, representatives from both the School of Continuing Medical Education at the Sackler Faculty of Medicine and Israel's National Agency for International Cooperation (MASHAV) met to establish a unique program offering clinical training to qualified physicians from developing countries. One of the main objectives was to create a program which would respond to the WHO (World Health Organization) mission of "Health for All by A.D. 2000." And so, the International Postgraduate Training in Medicine program was launched. Twenty years later, we are celebrating the successful completion of sixty training courses, in which approximately 1,400 physicians, from over 100 different countries, have participated.

WHY IN ISRAEL?

Hospitals and medical facilities in Israel offer state-of-the-art medical treatment in every aspect of clinical medicine, from the latest technology, to advances in equipment, to cutting-edge research. One of the key elements of our facilities' success is our devotion to clinical and basic research, which has led Israel to become a world leader in the field. In addition, hospitals are constantly pioneering new approaches and technologies that will benefit their patients.

Doctors joining the program not only observe, but immerse themselves in the stimulating environment of a vigorous and rapidly developing country. Moreover, the doctors are exposed to the ever-expanding needs and requirements of the 21st century. They experience the exciting challenge of being confronted with medical situations unfamiliar to them, and they are able to receive hands-on training in new methods of treatment, using advanced



equipment that may not yet be available in their own countries. Upon their return home, these doctors are able to implement and share the knowledge they acquired in Israel in hospitals and medical systems around the world.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The program, which is conducted in English, offers a two-and-a-half-month postgraduate clinical training in medicine to overseas physicians, who are on varying rungs of the medical ladder. The relatively short length of the course has allowed female physicians to play an important role in participating, and in fact, 30% of our alumni are women. Following a meticulous recruitment process, the selected participants are assigned to different departments in hospitals and rehabilitation centers affiliated with the Sackler Faculty of Medicine. These departments are selected according to the participants' various specialized fields of interest.

On the first day of the course, each participant is personally escorted to the hospital by a staff member of the International Postgraduate Training in Medicine, to meet with the head of the department responsible for tutoring the participant during the training. Together, they build an individualized program tailored to meet the participant's needs and goals.

The participants receive a temporary license to practice medicine from the Israeli Ministry of Health and are covered by malpractice and health insurance throughout the program. Attendance at the hospitals is required Sunday through Thursday. The visiting doctors actively participate in the daily routines of the departments, including seminars, conferences, supervised rounds, bedside instruction, surgery and other procedures. In addition, lectures are held on topics in medicine, health sciences and cultural aspects of Israel. Participants are taken on tours of the country and are invited to attend social activities organized especially for them. The program also includes basic instruction in emergency medicine and primary life support (ACLS), as well as a medically-oriented Internet workshop. A few Hebrew-language lessons are offered as well, to provide the doctors with a basic daily vocabulary.

Throughout the training, the participants are encouraged to share their own medical expertise and establish ties with the medical professionals in Israel. This exchange of knowledge benefits both sides. The participants have an opportunity to utilize the skills they acquired in





Israel toward improving medical systems in their home countries. The Israeli physicians have the opportunity to get acquainted with the participants' local communities and diseases. The sharing of knowledge so integral to the program leads to bilateral research and professional exchange visits.

A festive Graduation Ceremony is held to celebrate the conclusion of the training program. It is attended by members of the foreign Diplomatic Corps serving in Israel, heads of hospital departments, and tutors and hospital staff who have been involved in the visiting physicians' lives during their stay. During the ceremony, the participants are awarded a Graduation Certificate indicating the relevant discipline, signed by MASHAV and the Tel Aviv University. An ACLS Certificate is awarded to those physicians who passed the mandatory exam.

After twenty years and sixty courses, the facts speak for themselves. Our alumni continually express to us the profound impact their experience had on them, as well as their deep gratitude for the opportunity to study in Israel. Many return for further training or visits.

It is this positive feedback that motivates us to constantly improve and amend the program's structure to meet the ever-changing needs of the developing world. Through the coming years, the courses may change structurally; however, the goals remain the same - to share Israel's cutting-edge knowledge with the developing world!



More and more of the publications and information of MASHAV are going online!

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