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**SOME REFLECTIONS ON SPECIFICITY OF DENTAL DOCTORS’**  
**POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION**

*This paper highlights the essential present-day issues and peculiarities of dental doctors’ post-graduate training. The routine on designing and planning post-graduate training courses has been found out as effective when is based on the number of some key principles of andragogy and takes into consideration the specificity of the subject area.*

**Key words:** *post-graduate training, training course, dental doctors, design, planning.*

*В роботі розглянуті основні проблеми та особливості післядипломної освіти лікарів-стоматологів. Приведені андрагогічні принципи навчання, використання яких дозволяє підвищити ефективність навчального процесу на етапі післядипломної підготовки стоматологів.*

**Ключові слова:** *післядипломна освіта, навчальний процес, лікар-стоматолог, розробка, планування.*

*В работе рассмотрены основные проблемы и особенности последипломного образования врачей-стоматологов. Приведены андрагогические принципы обучения, использование которых позволяет повысить эффективность учебного процесса на этапе последипломной подготовки стоматологов.*

**Ключевые слова:** *последипломное образование, учебный процесс, врач-стоматолог, разработка, планирование.*

Improving the quality of health care services continues to be a priority, and in particular in the dynamic socio-economic context nowadays. One of the ways to meliorate health care efficiency, along with applying up-to-date forms of care delivery, is to provide the innovative and effective the system of life-long professional training for healthcare professionals to match up to high modern standards.

Objectives of this study were to focus on and analyze the key characteristics in providing dental doctors’ post-graduate training and to compare with traditional approaches integral for undergraduate pedagogy.

The purpose of the postgraduate professional training is to enrich knowledge and to hone professional skills in various activities related to the main occupational field as well as to promote professional and personal development of specialists. As postgraduate training is designed for highly motivated and ambitious specialists, the training process is characterized by a number of features that enable to consider postgraduate education as a way to facilitate adaption of young specialists to new conditions on the one hand, and on the other hand, it is a powerful tool for socio-economic transformations. It is essential to emphasize that one of key characteristics of postgraduate training is that the mode in organizing training process and therefore the progress greatly rely on the responsibility of the trainees, who are actively involved in choosing the field of study, planning and prioritizing between the subfields and topics, selecting the methodology etc. The mentors or supervisors often serve as moderators of facilitators [6].

One of the challenges the postgraduate dental doctors are facing is the noticeable influence by previously acquired but now out-of-date pedagogical training scheme, which mainly directed to harvest ready knowledge, separation between theory and practice, and where lectures were a predominant teaching form. Moreover, during the process of specialists’ training it is important to take into account of their age, psychological,

professional, social factors and a number of other determinants. At the same time, some adults may experience some difficulties during the post-graduate training that are often due to unwillingness or unreadiness for some transformations, or can be explained by a variety of psychological causes. Therefore, when planning and implementing the post-graduate training process, there might appear a necessity to select and to apply the most appropriate both conventional and innovative approaches. Fundamental principles of adult learning theory (andragogy) were formulated by M. S. Knowles (1970) [2]:

- adult learners have the main responsibility for their learning;
- adults strive for self-realization, independence, self-management;
- adults accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning;
- adult individuals learn in order to solve important real-life tasks and to achieve specific goals;
- adult becomes oriented increasingly to apply their knowledge and skills immediately;
- adult learning is related to temporal, spatial, routine, professional, social factors, which can either impede or facilitate learning;
- adult learning is problem-centred rather than content-oriented;
- adult learning process is a co-operation with mentors or supervisors through all its stages: planning, implementation, correction, evaluation.

The above-mentioned principles applied for post-graduate training are significantly different from the approaches applied for traditional undergraduate pedagogy. During the post-graduate training, disciplines containing integrated material across several related fields (cross-sectoral disciplines) become a focus. Moreover, there are different approaches towards establishing collaboration with learners, communication methods, sharing responsibility for results, and motivation to learn. Dental doctors become actively involved into the training, their experience provides the basis for the learning activities, and they try to match the training information with their practical goals and objectives. Dental intern doctors acquire new knowledge at different pace, therefore when working with them it is necessary to pay special attention to the individual pace of learning. The training course should be conducted through such forms of training, which are based on not only mentor-learner interaction, but on active learner-learner interaction and cooperation. To implement this goal, the staff of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, Ukrainian Medical Stomatological Academy, practices the discussion of clinical cases of patients, which are prepared by a group of speakers. This form of training gives the better opportunity to express own thoughts freely, to generate interests and vivid discussions [3].

Relying upon the above-mentioned peculiarities of postgraduate training, we apply the basic principles that can significantly improve the effectiveness of training course [6].

1. The principle of priority of self-directed study. This principle provides the dental doctors with the opportunity to learn the information, to master new terms, concepts, classifications, to understand new processes and technologies in self-regulated pace. Self-learning and application of modern Internet technologies [1] are very helpful in this case. Individual work is the mutual exchange of information between the mentor and the post-graduate student.

2. The principle of co-operation with other learners and the instructor through the training course. All the participants of the learning are equal parts.

3. The principle of using positive life experience (especially social and professional), practical knowledge, skills as a basis for learning. The intern doctors have the opportunity to share their experience, professional skills with others, through reports at seminars, clinical case presentations, discussions, etc.

4. The principle of correcting outdated experience and personal attitudes that impede the new knowledge acquisition. Disputes, debates, discussion, case studies are quite good ground to foster new viewpoints and to open new perspectives.

5. The principle of individual approach based on personal needs, taking into account the social and psychological characteristics of an individual and those restrictions imposed by his /her activities, free time available, financial resources, technical capabilities, and other resources. The student-centred approach is based on the assessment of the student's knowledge background and needs analysis, on the analysis of his/ her professional activity, social status and the nature of relationships within the team. Preliminary surveys, questionnaires, testing allow instructors to create a social and psychological portrait of an individual trainee and a profile of the group that will be taken into account during training course.

6. The principle of learning electivity of learning that consists in giving a learner an opportunity freely to choose goals, content, forms, sources, tools, terms, place and pace of training.

7. The principle of reflectivity that is based on the conscious attitude toward learning, which in turn is a major part of his self-motivation. It is not a problem for a specialist doctor to make a conscious choice of a training motive. By conducting webinars, workshops, interviews, presentations of new technologies, the staff of the department fosters the trainees' learning activity.

8. The principle of immediate relevance and impact of subjects learned to the professional activity. Based on this principle, prior to the planning and organization of training courses, an analysis of the previous activity of the learners is conducted that enables to formulate a specific purposes and objectives of the training.

9. The principle of systematic approach to learning that consists in regularity, continuity of training taking into account the results of previously learned knowledge and new needs. This principle is achieved through the continuity of the material taught at different stages of postgraduate education, for instance, during the internships and during various refresher courses etc.

10. The principle of learner's development. The postgraduate training is aimed at developing the personality, fostering the ability to self-study, promoting critical thinking, mastering new things throughout the professional and social activities [4].

Thus, the postgraduate training for dental doctors is characterized by a number of essential peculiarities, which can be implemented through fundamentally different approach to the education. The principles we have represented allow us to some extent to increase the efficiency of the post-graduate training courses.

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