

A call to advance mentorship in continuing professional development

Un appel à la promotion du mentorat dans le développement professionnel continu

Mitesh Patel¹

¹University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Correspondence to: Mitesh Patel BSc, MD, FRCPC Assistant Professor, University of Toronto Room 3-455; 1001 Queen Street West Toronto ON, M6J 1H4 Canada; email: Drmitesh.patel@utoronto.ca

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Mentorship is a fundamental component of continuing professional development (CPD). Mentoring shapes professional identities by moulding one's values and beliefs while also nurturing professional and personal development.¹ A practitioner's impetus to pursue opportunities to learn and advance one's skills in medical practice can be directly informed by mentorship. Physicians are in a unique position to mentor their colleagues and junior learners due to medicine's hierarchical structure and professional obligations for continuing education. The advancement of mentorship practices across medicine is thus of great importance to CPD.

The need to advance mentorship models and mentorship skills amongst mentors should be identified as a priority in CPD. Proficiency in providing mentorship to colleagues, but also training mentors to advance their mentorship skills is equally imperative. There is limited research conducted in this regard; further research and evaluation is required to better determine how we can educate mentors to advance their mentoring skills, and how we should organize mentoring programs to ensure mentees are well served.

As per Ratnapalan,² there are four forms of mentoring: apprenticeship, cloning, nurturing and friendship. Each form of mentoring requires specialized training and skills for which there are few formalized and evaluated programs. This gap in educational research continues to be a focus for further research and growth. Novel mentoring programs have been suggested in the literature, including

Cascading Mentorship Models, as described by the primary author in a unique training program that enables postgraduate residents to mentor undergraduate medical students.³ Further development of such programs in CPD would assist in advancing mentorship across medicine. The advancement and implementation of virtual technology has also enhanced our ability to connect and may further opportunities for mentoring.²

By advancing mentorship models in CPD, we can ultimately work towards improving job satisfaction and patient care. Furthermore, mentorship has been shown to advance academic career advancement and scholarly pursuits.² The benefits of such programming are thus far reaching, and it is imperative that we advance our understanding and programming related to mentorship in CPD.

Conflicts of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest to declare.

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