

Doctor's annual appraisal and revalidation

A doctor should be a life long learner to maintain good medical practice. Unless a doctor keeps himself up-to-date in his chosen speciality, he will not be able to provide quality medical service to the needy population. Doctors of developed countries are encouraged to acquire Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or continuing medical education so that the quality of their medical practice is assured. They are expected to demonstrate their good medical capability either by undergoing annual appraisal or through individual route. Revalidation of practicing doctors will begin in April 2005 in the United Kingdom. By 1st January 2005, all doctors in UK must hold a license to practice and this will be revalidated every five years. This system is expected to be efficient and effective to win confidence and build trust among the professions and its major stakeholders. The main reason for the introduction of revalidation is to ensure that the doctors demonstrate on a regular basis that they are safe and competent to practice modern medicine. The main objective of the newly introduced periodic evaluation of doctors is to maintain good medical practice. This can be divided in the following seven headings.

1. Good clinical care
2. Maintaining good medical practice
3. Teaching and training
4. Relationship with patients
5. Working with colleagues
6. Probity
7. Personal health

Doctors working in the governmental and non-governmental institutions have to provide details of their clinical works and academic activities including research. There seems to be a coordinated effort among British Medical Association, General Medical Council (GMC), Royal Colleges, employing agencies and consumers in the United Kingdom. GMC has already developed recording system for doctor's annual appraisal.

Medical science of Kathmandu University has introduced Continuing Medical Education (CME) hours for its faculty members. To be eligible to be a faculty member of medical colleges of Kathmandu University, one has to have at least fifty annual CME hours. This can be obtained by attending and / or presenting papers in the seminars, workshops, or conferences.

One can get CME hours even by chairing a scientific session or by delivering a talk on medical related subjects. The whole objective of introducing CME hours is to create an academic environment in the teaching institutions and to encourage doctors to keep themselves up-to-date in their field of specialty.

Taking the global trend into consideration, even the Ministry of Health, HMG, Nepal and medical colleges should develop the annual appraisal system for doctors. Some weightage of annual appraisal for promotion to next position will make the system effective.

Reference:

A license to Practice and Revalidation, General Medical Council, April 2003.

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