



COMMENTARY

Faculty Development in Internal Medicine: A Critical Investment in the Future of Medical Education

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DESCRIPTION

As the landscape of healthcare continues to evolve, so too must the approaches to educating the next generation of internists. Central to this evolution is the role of faculty—those entrusted with not only imparting knowledge but also modelling the skills, attitudes, and behaviours essential for modern medical practice. However, teaching in internal medicine is complex, requiring not only deep clinical expertise but also proficiency in pedagogy, mentorship, and inter-professional collaboration. Faculty development, therefore, is not just an option but a necessity. This commentary explores the importance of faculty development in internal medicine, its challenges, and the strategies needed to enhance the effectiveness of faculty in their dual roles as clinicians and educators. Faculty in internal medicine are tasked with educating trainees across a wide spectrum of topics, from foundational sciences and clinical reasoning to the intricacies of patient communication and ethical decision-making. They must also keep pace with rapidly advancing medical knowledge and technologies, integrating these into their teaching while maintaining the highest standards of patient care. Faculty development is also about supporting the professional growth of educators. This includes not only enhancing their teaching skills but also promoting their career advancement through mentoring, leadership training, and opportunities for scholarly activities. A robust faculty development program can help faculty achieve a balance between their clinical responsibilities and their roles as educators, researchers, and leaders within the institution. With the demands of patient care, administrative duties, and research, finding time for professional development can be difficult. This challenge is particularly acute in internal medicine, where the workload is often intense and unpredictable. Technology offers significant opportunities to enhance faculty development, particularly in terms of flexibility and accessibility. Online learning platforms, webinars, and virtual workshops can provide faculty with the training they need, at a time and

place that fits their schedules. Additionally, digital tools can facilitate peer collaboration and the sharing of best practices across institutions. Creating a culture that values continuous improvement in education is essential for effective faculty development. This includes recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching, providing mentorship and support for educators, and fostering an environment where faculty are encouraged to innovate and experiment with new teaching methods. Leadership plays a crucial role in setting the tone for this culture, by prioritizing faculty development and integrating it into the institution's strategic goals. Mentorship is a critical component of faculty development, offering less experienced educators the guidance and support they need to grow in their roles. Peer support networks can also be valuable, providing opportunities for faculty to share experiences, challenges, and successes. By fostering a collaborative community of educators, institutions can create a supportive environment that encourages continuous learning and professional growth. Faculty development is a critical investment in the future of internal medicine education. By equipping educators with the skills, knowledge, and support they need, faculty development programs enhance the quality of education and, ultimately, the quality of patient care. While challenges such as time constraints, resource limitations, and cultural resistance exist, these can be addressed through strategic integration of development activities into clinical practice, leveraging technology, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and aligning faculty development with institutional goals. As the demands on internal medicine continue to grow, so too must the support for those who teach it, ensuring that they are well-prepared to educate the next generation of internists.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.