

Vocational Training for Family Physicians

The Family Medicine Training Programme (FMTP) to train doctors for the College Diplomate Membership (MCGP) began a year after the College was founded in 1971. This was taken over by the Masters examination in 1993. The Fellowship training programme was started in 1999 to train FM leaders to augment those who had distinguished themselves after many years of practice and elected to fellowship. The Graduate Diploma was started also in 1999 to be the benchmark

certification of family physicians. Figure 1 gives an overview of the status of FM vocational training and Fig 2 gives details of the various training programmes.

It will be useful to position all these programmes in relation to the work that family physicians could now do and be recognized for. The GDFM, Masters and College Fellowship awards are professional prerequisites in career development upon which

other eligibility criteria for example administrative and leadership attributes are added. The term, "Family Physician" is now a term that defines those doctors vocationally trained in FM. These doctors are now put to work to provide extended and enhanced clinical services to patients. Some family physicians are taking the extra step to develop expertise in these areas by completing graduate diplomas (such as that in Geriatric Medicine and Psychotherapy from NUS), by clinical attachments and/or mentorship by experts in those fields.

The College has pledged to build the capacity of primary care by leveraging on the current FM training programmes (FMTP) in place and by working with the Ministry on other initiatives. Ensuring that primary care contributes to the health of the Nation is after all the *raison d'être* of the College.

Figure 1: Current Status of College FM Vocational Training

Current membership	Presently in training	Exited/Awarded
Fellowship by election	-	19
Fellowship by assessment	35	18
MCGP (till 1992)	-	61
MMed (FM)/MCFP	55	180
GDFM	119	56
Total	209	348

Figure 2: Overview of the Family Medicine Training Programmes (FMTP) in Singapore

	Family Medicine Training Programmes (FMTP)			
	GDFM	Masters		Fellowship
Entry requirements	1 year as medical officer (MO) or GP	Programme A At least 2-year MO & selected for Ministry of Health Traineeship programme	Programme B GDFM and 2 year primary care postings OR 4 years primary care postings	MMed-MCFP & actively involved in FM clinical practice, teaching & professional development
Duration	2 years off-the-job training	3 years on-the-job - 2 year hospital postings & 1 year primary care	2 years off-the-job training	2 years off-the-job training
Supervising Body	Institute of FM CFPS	NHG & Singhealth polyclinics in 3 rd year	Division of Graduate Medical Studies, NUS	Institute of FM CFPS
FMTP Modular Courses	8 quarterly modules each comprising of distance learning & 4 workshops covering whole-person medicine, systems and practice management.			
Tutorials & small group meetings	8 tutorials based on quarterly themes	10 Combined Rounds & 10 monthly tutorial	20 Combined Round, 40 weekly tutorials, 20 clinical rounds	20 FMFP meetings held monthly
Courses	3 mandatory courses Principles & Practice (P&P); Communication & Counseling (C & C); & Exam Revision;	Short skills courses conducted by polyclinics;	1-week full-time Hospital Attachment	3 mandatory courses viz. Method of Instruction, Audit & Research Methodology;
	BCLS & 2 electives	BCLS & 2-week fulltime Mmed Revision Course in hospitals		Clinical Elective
Course Work	Distance learning & tutorial assignments	6 case commentaries 1-week practice audit		Log book documenting learning, clinical work, research & teaching involvement
Summative Assessment by	Division of Postgraduate Medical Studies, FM Committee National University of Singapore.			Censor Board CFPS
Format Of Assessment	MCO & KFP	MCQ, MEQ & spot/slide examination		Exit Interview
	Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)	2 long cases in Paed & IM 4 short cases in Paed, IM, OG & either Surgery or Orthopaedics		
College Membership Eligibility	Ordinary Membership	Collegiate Membership		Fellowship
Professional Recognition	Certified Family Physician	Senior Family Physician		Consultant Family Physician