The experience of psychiatry trainees who have participated in the Faculty of Medical Leadership’s National Medical Director’s Scheme in England

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Abstract

Introduction: Leadership is increasingly recognised as an important skill for junior psychiatrists to acquire in order to address the many challenges facing mental healthcare globally.

Objectives: This presentation will provide an insight from the perspective of psychiatry trainees who have participated in a high profile leadership-training scheme established by the UK Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM). They will describe their experiences and tips to apply the learnt skills to improve global mental health.

Methods: In 2011 FMLM set up the National Medical Director’s Clinical Fellowship Scheme to provide experiential training for junior doctors from all specialties in a variety of national organisations. These have included NHS England, Health Education England, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, the General Medical Council, British Medical Journal and the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Fellowships last for a year and are full time. Each fellow works directly with one of the most senior leaders within the organisation on a range of activities including drafting policy, chairing meetings, developing strategy and liaising with external stakeholders.

Results: The scheme has proved to be hugely popular, with applications far exceeding places available each year. The scheme has expanded from 11 placements in the first year to 29 this year. Participants have reported a wide range of benefits, including exposure to high-level leaders, the opportunity to gain practical experience of national policy making and the benefits of being part of a multi-specialty cohort of their peers.

Discussion: There is an increasing emphasis on the need for psychiatrists across the world to develop leadership skills, but there has been much debate on how to most effectively deliver such training. The National Medical Director’s Clinical Fellowship Scheme provides an intensive and immersive model, which several junior psychiatrists have benefitted from in England. It has a particular focus on experiential learning and on the development of policy at a national or international level.

Conclusions: The FMLM National Medical Director’s Clinical Fellowship Scheme provides a highly successful model of leadership training, which may be of interest to other countries looking to develop similar opportunities.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org

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