

Opinion Article

Continuing professional development of physiologists: Role of Association of Physiologists and Pharmacologists of India

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BACKGROUND

Continuing professional development (CPD) can be defined as a broad range of activities that a person undertakes or participates, to maintain, improve or develop their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the professionals, those they work with and most importantly the patient.^[1] CPD, a broader concept than continuing medical education (CME), refers to the continuing development of the comprehensive nature of clinical practice, covering in addition to knowledge and skills of medical practice the wider domains of professionalism (e.g., medical, managerial and social subjects) needed for top quality professional performance. It includes all activities that doctors undertake, formally and informally to take care, update, develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes in response to the requirements and desire of their patients.^[2]

The better health of all citizens of the nation is the main goal of Government of India and so of the medical education. This must be as a whole the mission of the all the official associations of medical fraternity including Association of Physiologists and Pharmacologists of India (APPI) for physiologists like any other association of medical sciences. In keeping with its constitution, APPI is committed to undertake and promote the highest scientific and ethical standards in medical education, research and health care to encourage development of learning methods, new instructional tools and innovative ideas for improved health care to the general public.

In compliance with its byelaws, the APPI hosted a physiology leaders' summit from 25 to 26 February 2020. The purpose of the summit was to discuss implementation of CBME for UG and PG for quality improvement of medical education across India.

The APPI leaders' summit discussed three main intentions to improve the quality of physiology education and career opportunity to physiologists:

- To stimulate institutions, organisations and authorities, having accountability for medical education to formulate a uniform plan for quality improvement in accordance with CBME
- To establish a system of national evaluation, accreditation and recognition of clinical physiology programmes to assure quality standards for the clinical competency in clinical physiology
- To safeguard and promote physiology practice in clinical physiology and proper utilisation of physiology workforce, in the context of motivating youngsters to opt physiology as their career opportunity.

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1. APPI as academic leader

- The APPI must take responsibility for leadership and organisation of CPD activities
- They should ensure that the professional leadership is evaluated regularly with respect to achievement of the mission and outcomes of CPD activities
- The APPI leadership should include medical professional expert from other medical professional organisations/associations to provide various CPD activities, not directly related to clinical physiology but to other medical profession, including the health-care hospitals and the pharmaceutical/medicotechnical industry. The APPI should formalised a uniform CPD activities, which may be conducted at certain identified institutions such as medical universities, postgraduate institutes, medical colleges, professional organisations, national and international scientific organisations, local or national health authorities as well as the pharmaceutical/medicotechnical industry. The same may be supported by APPI for quality assurance and control.

2. How to evaluate CPD activities?

3. Role of APPI in programme monitoring and evaluation

The APPI should establish and apply mechanisms to

- Monitor and evaluate the processes and outcomes of CPD activities
- Address the mission, the projected outcomes, the educational programme, assessment, if any, documentation, the individual professional participation in CPD
- Make use of data to monitor and evaluate the acquired outcomes, including the ability to deliver high-quality patient care
- Consider involvement of expertise in health-care delivery and in medical education for CPD evaluation
- Programme assessment is the process of systematically gathering information to review the effectiveness of the competency and training. It would imply the utilisation of reliable and valid methods of information collection and analysis for the aim of demonstrating the qualities of the programme in reference to the mission and the intended and acquired outcomes. Involvement of external experts in the concerned specialty and regulatory bodies would further broaden the quality of CPD [Table1]
- APPI may involve an expertise to further improve the quality and broaden the base of the training. This would facilitate monitoring the resources available, the training outcomes and the benefits derived by the individual professional.

The APPI must develop a system in collaboration with various stakeholders that encourage and recognise participation in

local, national and international CPD activities, scientific meetings and other structured and formulated activities. APPI is also to ensure opportunities for physiologists to attend these structured CPD to increase the level of their competencies. Structured CPD activities may include attending courses or lectures, e-learning, institutional, national and international conferences, participation in research and specialised laboratories.

AUDIT OF PHYSIOLOGISTS' CPD BY APPI

Every year, the constituted expert committee of APPI may select a random sample of physiologists/institute for more detailed inspection of CPD. The APPI may take action on physiology dept./institute if it is not maintaining the standard of professional competence. APPI may draft guidelines for physiology and physiologists their cooperation with any audit process applied by the APPI. The institute/physiology department/institute may be asked to provide underneath records concerning continuance of professional competence. Physiology department/physiologists who maintain professional competence in fulfilment with standards set by the APPI may get the quality control approved without difficulty. If, however, the expert committee of APPI becomes aware that department is not maintaining the standard of competence as per the guidelines, it may take action to promote confidence in the professional development considering the impact on society and other physiologists.

CONCLUSION

Diversity of academic programmes should be fostered, to account for various academic, social, economic and cultural conditions, completely different patterns of malady, and to support social responsibility. The standards give an example for medical colleges and the association or regulatory bodies that accredit them to stipulate institutional and national standard, to act as a lever for quality improvement. CPD includes all activities that doctors undertake, formally and informally, so as to update, develop and enhance their information, skills and attitudes in response to the necessities of the society. Participating in CPD is not only an obligation to gain in skills but also a requirement for enhancing the quality of health care [Table1]. CME describes continued update of knowledge within the field of information and skills of medical practice; CPD, a broader thought, refers to the continued development of the multifaceted competencies inherent in practice, covering wider domains of experience required for fine quality skilled performance. APPI should encourage physiologists to engage in reflective learning as frequently as possible. Learning should be directly related to your scope of practice in regard to local requirements. CPD should also be suitable for your level of experience in its significance and intricacy [Table1].

Table 1: Template of completing a CPD record.

Key dates	What did you Do and why?	What did you Learn from it	How have you Will you use this?	Evidence provided
20 January 2020–27 January 2020 (7 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended M-Mode, 2D and colour Doppler echocardiography Perform three cases independently under supervision of Dr. ABC cardiologist/radiologist/physiologist 	Understand how to assess cardiac performance systolic and diastolic qualitatively and quantitatively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching UG and PG Research Health care 	Certificate of attendance

CPD template for certificate of authentication

- Name
- Duration of activity: Days/weeks/months
- Type of activity: 2–5 sentences
- What did you do? 3–7 sentences
- What did you learn from it? 3–7 sentences
- How have you/will you use this? 3–7 sentences
- I certify that this CPD activity has been undertaken as stated above under my supervision.
- Guide - HOD
- Signature - Signature
- Date.

Declaration of patient consent

Patient's consent not required as there are no patients in this study.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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