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Practice and perception of continuous professional development of doctors in selected hospitals in Colombo District

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Background: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is important for medical professionals as it is a process to ensure the standard of medical practice. Therefore, assessing practice and perception of CPD is essential for further development of the CPD process.

Objective: To describe the practice and perception on CPD of doctors in selected hospitals in the Colombo District.

Method: The study was carried out in National hospital of Colombo, Colombo South Teaching hospital, Base hospital, Homagama, and Sri Jayawardenepura General hospital. This is a descriptive cross sectional study. Self-administered questionnaire (developed in-house and pre-tested) was given to the medical professionals with full Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC) registration.

Results: A percentage of 56.5 of the sample were medical officers, 48.4% had not been engaged in any postgraduate studies, while 41.9% were currently following postgraduate studies. The major barriers for participation in CPD were excessive work load and difficulty in taking leave which was 80.6% and 53.2% respectively. The majority (90.3%) had participated in lectures and 71% participated in ward round classes. A percentage of 98.3 of doctors agreed that CPD is needed for the medical profession, and 58.1% would like it to be a mandatory process. If it is mandatory, 83.9% would like to have revalidation, and 74.2% would like it to be revalidating in five years. A percentage of 77.4 were not aware of national CPD certificate and 96.8% mentioned lectures and workshops as the preferable CPD method. Career progression was expected from CPD by 83.9% and protecting patients from substandard practices was also expected by 67.7%.

Conclusion: Awareness of national CPD Certificate is low. The majority would like to have a five year revalidation. Lectures and workshops are the most preferable CPD methods. The main barriers in relation to participation in CPD are excessive work load, and difficulty in taking leave. Expected benefits of CPD are career progression, and protect patients from substandard practices.