

Editorial

Where Will The Cardiologists Come From?

Both the Cardiovascular Institutes in Pakistan, i.e. The NICVD Karachi and the AFIC Pindi and all the departments of cardiology across the country, are manned by foreign trained physicians including a few properly trained cardiologists. Pakistan, therefore, has been completely dependant on foreign trained Pakistani physicians who opt to return home. With gradual and severe limits being placed by countries like USA and UK on the number of trainee foreign physicians being allowed into those countries, the pool of foreign trained physicians from which Pakistan has been drawing is rapidly getting depleted. Therefore, we can expect a sudden void in the number of cardiologists available in Pakistan when the senior cadre of the present day cardiologists retire with-in the next decade.

Have we taken cognizance of this very serious problem ? Are we doing anything about it ? Well, the NICVD Karachi being the only properly staffed Cardiology teaching institution in the country has made some efforts towards developing expertise in Cardiology within the country. A lower level Diploma in Cardiology was started under aegis of the Karachi University and over the last five years over 50 physicians have undergone training in this course. However, this is an introductory course aimed at producing general practitioners with interest in cardiology and not cardiologists. In order to train full fledged cardiologists an FCPS in cardiology was instituted over four years ago under approval of the College of physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan. So far, only three physicians have enrolled in this program and only one has been successful in obtaining FCPS Cardiology. With this slow rate of progress (i.e. One FCPS Cardiologist in four year for whole of Pakistan) we can expected to go nowhere! What then will happen in the next ten years is anybody's guess.

Should we wait complacently, as is our usual habit, until the moment of truth is on us, or, should we like intelligent people and nations plan ahead ? Let us address ourselves to this distant but very critical problem. Let us not let our profession down, that is, if we indeed are Cardiologists and believe in developing cardiological services in Pakistan.

Editor.