



Post-graduate Psychiatry Teaching and Training in India

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In India, the history of psychiatry is approximately 80 years of post-graduate education. The first psychiatrist who received an MD degree from an Indian medical institution was Late Prof. L.P. Verma, who received his degree in 1941 from Patna Medical College, Bihar.¹ In India, a post-graduate course in psychiatry is taught in two forms (MD in Psychiatry and DNB in Psychiatry). MBBS is the minimum educational requirement to be eligible for pursuing MD or DNB Psychiatry course. The duration of the post-graduate course in psychiatry is three years in India. A recent study revealed that the post-graduate degree courses in psychiatry are unequally distributed in the country, which might be responsible for the not-so-equitable distribution and generation of mental health manpower in the country.² In India, general hospital psychiatry units (psychiatry units attached to medical colleges) play an instrumental role in training post-graduate students of psychiatry. Other than this, mental hospitals also provide teaching and training facilities for post-graduate psychiatry trainees.³

The National Medical Council of India had set certain criteria for a teacher eligible as a post-graduate teacher of psychiatry and any Psychiatry department willing to start a post-graduate course.¹ The post-graduate psychiatry training aims at imparting adequate knowledge on mental health and illnesses that enhances the competence of the trainee to deal with mental health issues independently in the community in an ethical manner.¹ It also aims to build research and teaching skills among the post-graduate residents of psychiatry.

A post-graduate psychiatry trainee is expected to have three months posting in Neurology, two years of posting in General Adult Psychiatry, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry and Geriatric Psychiatry, six months posting in Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry and three months of posting in Community Psychiatry.^{1,4} This has been recommended with the intention to have intensive exposure of the post-graduate trainee to various aspects of psychiatry for comprehensive learning of the subject.

In India, teaching of post-graduate students occurs through various platforms, like:

1. Bedside teaching during the clinical rounds (grand rounds of psychiatry): It is mainly of case-oriented approach, demonstration of skills and discussion about the management aspects of hospitalized patients.

2. Classroom teaching: It mostly consists of –
 - a. Presentation of long cases in the form of case conferences
 - b. Journal clubs focus on understanding research methodology, basic bio-statistics, understanding the current research in psychiatry as well as interpretation of the findings of a research.
 - c. Seminars include a focused discussion of relevant mental health issues and developments in different sub-specialities of psychiatry.
 - d. Other teachings like – tutorials, psychotherapy group meetings, and consultation-liaison case discussions are used in post-graduate teaching programs.

These teaching institutes have their own set of agendas to teach the psychiatry trainees at their institutions.

Several post-doctoral fellowship courses and super-specialization courses in psychiatry have been started in certain premiere institutes of psychiatry in India.⁵ Unfortunately, very few undergraduates pick up psychiatry as their career, which is mostly due to the negative experience of teaching the undergraduate period.^{6,7}

To improve the post-graduate training in psychiatry, it is important to have motivated and interested students in such post-graduate courses. To achieve this feat, undergraduate psychiatry teaching should be made interesting and motivating.

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