

EDITORIAL**A NOVELTY IN SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING IN GYNAECOLOGY: THE CASE OF REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY AND INFERTILITY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME**

The Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons was started 20 years ago with the aim of training highly skilled human resource for advancing medical expertise and research in the country. Indeed, over the years, the college has performed excellently in this task. With well-structured curriculum that placed emphasis on clinical excellence, competence in research and ethical practice, Its graduates can be seen all over the country providing specialized healthcare services to Ghanaians. A lot of district hospitals now have specialist doctors, where in the past, even regional hospitals were not that endowed. The establishment of the college, and its structured approach to training and the high quality of its products has arguably slowed down the exodus of young Ghanaian doctors to foreign countries for postgraduate training ¹.

The college has gone a notch higher by embarking on sub-specialty training. In the faculty of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, for example, sub-specialty training exists in Reproductive Health and Family Planning, Gynaecological Oncology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Urogynaecology, Advanced General Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and recently reproductive endocrinology and infertility. The college recognized the high prevalence of infertility in our country and the negative sociocultural and psychological impact it has on infertile couples and society at large². Hence its drive to start the fellowship programme to help improve the management of the condition in the country.

The challenge, however, is that none of the training institutions has the necessary infrastructure to embark on this highly skilled training programme, even though a good number of the faculty in these training institutions have the skill and know-how in advanced treatment of infertility, including assisted reproductive technology (ART). Faced with this challenge, the college with all stakeholders came up with a very innovative way to achieve its aim. A private-public partnership arrangement to train fellows in reproductive endocrinology and infertility (REI). A detailed curriculum was drawn by a team of academics, both local and international, consultants from International Federation of Fertility Societies (IFFS) and industry operators within the training institutions and from the

private sector. Some of these academics and industry operators are working in institutions outside the country and are directly involved in fellowship training in REI in their countries of residence. This engagement of practitioners in the private sector right from the formative stages of the programme ensured their commitment to making their facilities available for the accreditation and practical training of the fellows.

Indeed, the first batch of fellows have acquired valuable practical experience in ART from their rotations in these accredited private fertility hospitals. Most of them are collecting data for their dissertation from these institutions. In the next few months, we will have our first locally trained fellows in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI). These fellows hopefully will serve as focal points around which advanced treatment of infertility and training of doctors in REI in the regions will revolve.

While this unique and innovative arrangement has allowed for the smooth start of the fellowship training in REI by the college, the need to equip the training institutions with the necessary equipment that allows for in-house training and research cannot be overemphasized. It is our hope that a successful implementation of the REI fellowship programme will ultimately result in improvement in the management of infertility and reproductive endocrinopathies in the country and sub-region.

References

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