Urology Training in Malaysian Perspective: Opportunities and Challenges in the Past, Current, and Future

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Introduction and Objectives:

The Institute of Urology and Nephrology at General Hospital Kuala Lumpur was established in 1974, with a handful of urologists. Urology training was by apprenticeship, over 4 years, cumulating with certification by government gazette. The current Malaysian population is about 32 million; average life span is 75 years. ASEAN was established in 1997 and the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) was signed in 2009 and due for implementation in 2010! There is currently 120 urologists in Malaysia and to meet the target of 1 urologist to 100,000 population, Malaysia will need at least 200 urologists. With globalisation and especially within the FAUA and UAA regions, there is increasing need for collaboration.

Materials and Methods:

Data from within the Malaysian Urological Association, MUA archives were analysed. There is also information available on the website of the National Specialist Registry and the national urological associations of FAUA and UAA. There has also been intensified sharing of information at the national conferences of the FAUA and UAA.

Results:

The Malaysian Urological Association is in charge of urological training in Malaysia. The major urology training centres are in the Ministry of Health, MOH, lead ably by Dr Rohan Malek, Chief of Urology of MOH. The first MBU Examination was held in 2000. Previously the urology Part I examination was conducted locally. Since 2014, the FEBU-in-service examination is used as the Part I examination in Malaysia. The exit MBU certificate is benchmarked with the FRCS Urology from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, since 2008. Dr Graeme Ian Conn is responsible from Glasgow. The training usually includes a year out of Malaysia, usually in Australia, United Kingdom and lately among the UAA countries. In 2015, a decision was made by the MUA and the Ministry of Health Malaysia to start a direct intake programme instead of having trainees who are already qualified general surgeons. The medical officers who have passed the MRCS Part A are then streamlined into the urology training programme. This is important because the training centres with sufficient urology workload and trainers are limited, to about a dozen in the country. This is an integrated training programme covering all the Ministry of Health and the university urology centres.

However, the trend for specialist services is still concentrated in the urban areas with gross imbalance of urology manpower in the private sector. In 2018, the MUA and the Ministry of Health intensified PPP, Public Private Partnership. Urologists in the public sector are given a whole day to do private practice at designated centres. Private urologists are also given sessional contracts in public hospitals, very much as in the practice in Australia and the United Kingdom.

With increasing numbers and change in training environment, a brand new urological curriculum was formulated in 2017, spearheaded by MUA President, Dr. S. Selvalingam. The curriculum together with assessments, are accessible online. The trainees have regular structured workshops, AUCs, advanced urology courses, usually held 2 monthly. The MBU certificate is to be accredited by MMC, Malaysian Medical Council

Conclusion:

Urology training in Malaysia has progressed stepwise to provide urology service of regional and international standards. With increasing globalisation, training programmes can be enhanced with collaboration with other partners, notably FAUA, UAA, EAU, Australia and United Kingdom. However, automatic mutual recognition is not likely possible because of socioeconomic factors.