

Family Medicine Programme under NRHM

NHSRC's PHA team have been facilitating a distance learning programme for creating Family Physicians who can 'resolve more and refer less' when posted at peripheral public health institutions. The team worked with CMC Vellore and developed a curriculum (in 2008-09) for the NRHM supported Post Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (PGDFM) programme, which is offered through distance learning. Further NHSRC (PHA) and CMC Vellore teamed up and visited all high focus states (in 2009-10) for identifying training sites and also to meet up with the Mission Director's of these states for sponsoring candidates for the PGDFM programme. The programme has 30 days contact sessions and monthly video conferencing. Post training, faculties from CMC Vellore also does 'supportive supervisory' visits to ensure practice of protocols by the students. A letter was also issued from the MoHFW to all high focus states for sponsoring candidates for the NRHM supported PGDFM programme. Following this, some of the high focus states started sponsoring candidates for the programme. The current status of this programme is;

Table. 1. State PGDFM status

State	Candidates sponsored			
	2010**	2011	2012	2013
Bihar	13	22	6	29
Chattisgarh	28	-	-	-
Uttarakhand	6	-	-	-
Tamil Nadu#	45	45	-	-
Orissa*	5	-	-	-
Total	97	67	6	29

*not started due to less no of candidates

** 2010 batch graduated in March 2013

sponsored by THSP

Along with this PGDFM pilot programme, the team pursued with MGR University, Chennai for a 3 year MD programme in Family Medicine incorporating surgical skills. This approach was keeping in mind the positioning of a FM doctor as a specialist at the CHC level who will manage, along with his team a set of comprehensive services including minor surgeries, chronic diseases management, C-sections, blood transfusions etc.

For scaling up these initiatives, the team got in touch with the AFPI, the Association for Family Physicians of India and organised a National Consultation on Family Medicine with 5 key themes;

- (a) Skill sets required of a Family Medicine doctor / nurse at Secondary care level
- (b) Family Medicine in Undergraduate curriculum
- (c) Family Medicine in PG curriculum
- (d) Family Medicine in Nursing
- (e) Governance & regulatory issues in Family Medicine

The recommendations of the National Consultation are available at www.nhsrcindia.org.

An expert group is being constituted from the members who participated in the consultation to develop the curriculum based on the recommendations of the National consultation on Family Medicine.

An important development after the National Consultation was the letter issued from Sh. Keshava Desiraju, Health Secretary, MoHFW, GOI addressing all states urging them to start postgraduate courses in Family Medicine in Medical colleges and that MD (FM) or DNB (FM) be made desirable qualifications for posting at CHCs and sub-district hospitals. The letter is available at www.nhsrcindia.org.

The NHSRC (PHA) who has undertaken this initiative consists of Dr. P Padmanaban and Prasanth K S.