

Review by the Attending Physician

Each day the attending physician observes the fellow's progress in the following areas:

- *Medical history and physical examination skills*
- *Effectiveness of communication with patients and their families*
- *Facilitation of patient decision-making*
- *Assessment and management of pain and other symptoms, as well as other physical, psychological, social, spiritual, practical and end-of-life issues*
- *Rationale for each patient's plan of care, including the underlying pharmacology*
- *Approaches to supporting patients and their families*
- *Documentation and billing*

Fellows are typically selected based on their level of interest, as demonstrated by their work with IPM faculty during in-country training programs, the recommendations of medical leaders in their countries, and the assessment of the IPM faculty team. To ensure that home institutions will support selected candidates in implementing what they have learned, each candidate is required to provide a letter from the home institution confirming institutional support for the candidate's participation and agreement that the fellow will be expected to use the acquired skills and knowledge to: (1) see patients and families, (2) build a more effective palliative care program, and (3) teach the core competencies of palliative care to colleagues in the organization and their countries. This letter must also confirm the home institution's willingness to fund the candidate's salary and related benefits throughout the fellowship program.

Training Program

Status at IPM: *After ensuring that the potential fellow has the credentials and visa needed to qualify for visitor-based education, the San Diego County Medical Society invites the physician to be a visiting "consultant" at IPM. This designation gives the fellow the standing of a 4th year medical student with the ability to admit and manage patients under the direct supervision of an attending physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of California.*

Medical English: *While English is the international language of medicine and all participants know some English, a basic understanding of English generally is not sufficient to get maximum utility out of IPM training visits. To prepare for the fellowship program, many participants enroll in the online English for Medical & Healthcare Professionals I and English for Medical & Healthcare Professionals II courses offered by University of California San Diego Extension.*

Visits to San Diego: *During the two to three year training program, each fellow makes one initial 6-week visit and then four to five 4-week visits to IPM at San Diego Hospice (SDH). At the beginning of each visit, each fellow works with an assigned attending physician and the program director to set three attainable goals for the visit.*

First Visit: *During the first 6-week visit, each fellow participates in a 10-day orientation, which includes many of the Education in Palliative and End-of-Life Care for Oncology (EPEC™-Oncology) modules, and then works for four weeks in one of the 12-bed inpatient units of the SDH Inpatient Care Center (ICC). Much of the time is spent adapting to the new organization, language and culture, and building relationships with IPM and SDH staff and other palliative care trainees.*

Once assigned to an ICC unit, each fellow interviews patients, performs physical examinations and develops treatment plans under the supervision of an attending physician and in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of nurses, pharmacists, social workers, spiritual counselors and other therapists. Fellows follow patients daily, change medications as needed, lead and participate in family conferences, inform and counsel patients and families, and provide acute bereavement support to families.

Financial Arrangements

Financial arrangements for this fellowship program are negotiated with each country and host institution individually.

Graduates

*Hasan Abbas,
Jordan
Mohammad
Bushnaq, Jordan
Mohammad Shtiat,
Jordan*

Current Fellows

*Ioseb Abesadze,
Georgia
Tamari Rukhadze,
Georgia
Odontuya
Davaasuren,
Mongolia
Ganaa Tserendorj,
Mongolia
Urska Lunder,
Slovenia
Agnes Calsina,
Spain
Quach Thanh
Khanh, Vietnam
Do Trong Thuy,
Vietnam*

Second and Third Visits: During these four-week visits, each fellow continues to work in one of the SDH ICC 12-bed units under the supervision of IPM faculty.

Fourth Visit: During their four-week visit, each fellow does primarily home hospice care, making home visits to interview and examine SDH patients in the company of an attending physician. With guidance from the IPM faculty physician, the fellow develops recommendations, calls primary physicians to make consultant recommendations, and follows patients to see the results of therapeutic interventions. The fellow also accompanies nurses, social workers, and spiritual counselors as an observer on home visits to learn how these other disciplines function. During either the fourth or fifth visit, each fellow participates in one week of bereavement training and one week in the pharmacy.

Fifth and Sixth Visits: During one of these four-week visits, each fellow participates on the SDH inpatient and outpatient palliative care services of the Doris A. Howell Consult Service at the University of California San Diego Moores Cancer Center and/or the Palliative Care Consult Service at Scripps Mercy Hospital. Each fellow sees consultations with the attending physician, nurse practitioner, or social worker; and follows patients to see the results of therapeutic interventions. If the fellow did not complete one week of pharmacy or bereavement training during the fourth visit, it will be completed during this visit.

Ongoing Education: While at IPM, international fellows participate in ongoing educational programs offered to U.S. fellows and interdisciplinary palliative medicine staff, including semi-weekly case-based conferences, weekly fellow seminars, weekly support groups specially tailored to international fellows, monthly Morbidity and Mortality conferences, and special guest presentations. Special sessions tutor fellows in effective education and presentation techniques, audiovisual aid design, and feedback methods; strategic and business planning strategies based on case examples from fellows' home institutions; and data collection and quality improvement, including how to develop palliative care guidelines and standards of practice, outcome measures, and performance improvement and accreditation strategies based on experiences at SDH, and abroad. International fellows are also expected to periodically practice their presentation skills by teaching at the educational conferences.

Standardized Patients: During the training period, each fellow completes at least two sessions with standardized patients. Early in the program, each fellow participates in a group session facilitated by a physician faculty member. The fellow tries different ways of breaking bad news to a standardized patient with advanced cancer; evaluates his/her performance; and gets feedback from peers, the simulated patient, and the faculty member. At the same time, the fellow learns how to observe and give effective feedback to other trainees. Later in each fellow's training program, a second interview is scheduled with a standardized family member to discuss goals of care and resuscitation status. Immediately afterwards, the standardized family member provides feedback on the interaction. The fellow then watches a videotape of the session with a faculty physician. Together, they critique the interaction and discuss alternative approaches.

"Overall, I can say very clearly that my experience with palliative care not only changed my career, but also the way I am looking at life, the way I am communicating with people, and the way I am trying to understand others."
Mohammad Bushnaq, Graduate from Jordan

Evaluation

During each visit to IPM and each in-country visitation, fellows receive feedback on competency development. At IPM, the attending physician and interdisciplinary team members evaluate each fellow's interactions with patients and families, participation in team meetings, presentations, and didactic teaching sessions.

Midway through each visit, the attending physician meets with the fellow to review the fellow's progress toward goals, suggest improvements, and offer mentoring assistance.

Near the end of each visit, five interdisciplinary team members confidentially evaluate the fellow's progress by completing a 360-degree evaluation tool.

At the end of each visit, the fellow completes a self-evaluation, using the 360-degree evaluation tool, and meets with the attending physician and/or program director to review the results of the interdisciplinary team members' 360-degree evaluations, give feedback on the training program and specific experiences, set goals for the next months' activities at home, and plan for in-country interval visits and return visits to IPM.

Training In-Country

Between visits to IPM, fellows are expected to lead interdisciplinary palliative care teams, see patients routinely, and build palliative care programs at their home institutions. IPM faculty members visit each fellow's home institution two to three times during the training program to:

- Conduct an ongoing assessment of the palliative care needs and resources of the home institution and country;
- Provide the fellow with bedside mentoring and structured feedback;
- Assist the fellow with classroom and bedside teaching of the interdisciplinary team;
- Assist the fellow with Morning Report, presentation of Grand Rounds, and other conferences and workshops as appropriate;
- Meet with leaders in the home institution, Ministry of Health, and other key governmental and nongovernmental organizations to plan for ongoing infrastructure support; and
- Engage with the local and national media to increase public awareness of the importance of palliative care throughout the illness experience.

In addition to mentoring the fellow, IPM faculty are constantly learning to provide more culturally-competent care and how to adapt the WHO Public Health Strategy to successfully integrate palliative care into the country's health care system.

During the entire training program, IPM faculty members provide telephone and e-mail support to fellows and administrative leaders as needed.

Evaluation

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Graduation

Upon successful completion of the International Palliative Medicine Fellowship Program, candidates receive a certificate and transcript from The Institute for Palliative Medicine, a primary teaching affiliate of the University of California San Diego. After graduation, fellows are typically recognized by their home institutions as palliative care consultants.

For Further Information:

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