

How to develop a successful radiation oncology residency program in a developing country with constrained economy

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Introduction: For any comprehensive cancer care, a well trained cancer professional staff is needed to assure best oncology practice. Radiation Oncology service is an essential component of cancer care delivery and therefore a well trained & high caliber specialists are needed. There has been lack in radiation oncologists in Jordan and the region for decades, with only handful western trained radiation oncologists available in Jordan. Aim: We at King Hussein Cancer Center (KHCC), Jordan has established in 2004, a well recognized & structured radiation oncology residency program, recognized by Jordan Medical Council to assure the availability of such well trained specialists not only for Jordan but the region as well. Methods: A 4 year program was established at KHCC. The program includes rotations at different departments like medical oncology, nuclear medicine, pathology and radiology. For more advanced training & exposure an external rotation for 3 months was allowed at a well reputed cancer center in USA & UK as a part of this residency program. A clinical curriculum was developed with the help of our colleagues in western countries, which includes routine site specific clinical rotations, didactic lectures in clinical oncology, radiobiology, medical physics, statistics & epidemiology & basic research. Yearly evaluation examination is being held and after successful completion of second year the residents are allowed to sit for part one (basic) examination & after completing four years of residency training, residents are allowed to sit for part two (clinical) examination run by the Jordan Medical Council. Beside, our residents are permitted to sit for the annual American College of Radiologists (ACR) examination. So far, many well trained oncologists, not only from Jordan but from the region, have successfully graduated from this program. Conclusion: By building a well structured Radiation Oncology Residency Program within a developing country with lack of radiation oncologists and resources & in collaboration with well known programs in developed countries, the obstacle of lack of such oncologists can be overcome.