

Guidelines for the Young Ophthalmologists' Mentorship Program in Nigeria

Mission statement:

To empower fledgling Ophthalmologists by fostering a platform of career networking opportunities, mentorship relationships and educational resources, to ultimately promote high quality, patient centered, eye care by the next generation of ophthalmic leaders in Nigeria.

Objectives:

1. To enable the transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise from experienced ophthalmologists to young professionals.
2. To help mentees set and achieve career goals, including subspecialty interests and research.
3. To instill and uphold the highest ethical standards in ophthalmic practice.
4. To nurture collaboration and professional networking in the ophthalmic community.
5. To encourage participation in community eye care programs and outreach initiatives.

Mentor identification:

1. Mentors should be experienced, qualified ophthalmologists enthusiastic about mentorship, ethical practice, and committed to professional development.
2. Mentors should participate voluntarily, demonstrating dedication to the growth of young ophthalmologists.
3. There should be diversity among mentors in subspecialties, practice settings and demographics to provide a wide range of perspectives.

Mentee Applications:

1. Young ophthalmologists in their early career stages, including residents and fellows within five years of practice, are eligible to apply as mentees.
2. Mentees must submit applications detailing their goals, expectations, and reasons for seeking mentorship.
3. The YOF mentorship committee should pair mentors and mentees based on mutual goals, interests, and geographical proximity where possible.

Ethics and Professionalism:

1. Both mentors and mentees must maintain strict confidentiality with regards to sensitive patient information and personal mentor/mentee information shared within the program.
2. There should be mutual respect guiding all interactions, acknowledging the value of diverse perspectives.
3. Conflict Resolution should occur swiftly to address any disputes or issues that may arise.

Program Structure should:

1. Encourage Mentors and mentees to communicate regularly, either in person or virtually, to discuss career development, cases, and goals.
2. Provide educational opportunities like seminars, webinars and workshops to enhance knowledge, skills networking and collaboration.
3. Evaluate periodically to assess the progress of the mentorship relationship and make necessary adjustments.

Community Engagement:

1. Participation in community eye care programs and initiatives should be encouraged to pay it forward and instill a sense of responsibility and service.
2. Support and guide mentees in research activities and publishing their work to contribute to the field.

Evaluation and Feedback:

1. A feedback mechanism system, for both mentors and mentees should be in place to assess the program's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
2. Periodic monitoring and evaluation should be done to regularly review the program's success in achieving its objectives and adjustments made as needed.

These guidelines will enable the Young Ophthalmologist Mentorship Program in Nigeria to nurture the next generation of skilled and ethical ophthalmologists thus advancing eye care in the country.