

Revalidation of Sri Lankan Doctors (Questions and Answers)

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1. What is revalidation or recertification of doctors?

It means periodic renewal of doctors' license to practice upon producing evidence of good medical practice. At the moment renewal is done every five years upon making a fee only. When revalidation comes into operation, doctors will have to show evidence of being up dated, in addition.

2. What is the purpose of introducing revalidation?

Medicine is a field changing fast and doctors need to be updated constantly. When revalidation is introduced, doctors have to update themselves and it is an essential part of Good Medical Practice as defined by the General Medical Council (GMC) of the UK. Revalidation has shown to improve individual doctors' performance as well as the organizational efficiency in countries where it is practiced.

3. Why are we doing this? Has the government pressurized the doctors to do it?

Not at all. It is a decision of the medical profession itself.

4. Why then do we want to opt for such a procedure voluntarily?

Yes. This is a very important question.

This shows the commitment of the medical profession for its own professional development.

5. Can you explain a bit more?

When revalidation is introduced all doctors have to keep up to date with new improvements in the field of medicine as it becomes a legal requirement. Only if doctors keep abreast with these new developments will they be able to pass that benefit to their patients. This will lead to high standards in the medical profession.

6. Is revalidation done in other countries?

Yes, in some developed countries this process has been there for over ten fifteen years. In the UK, the process started this year and revalidation will start in the year 2005.

7. Will our doctor like it?

Well, when the Sri Lanka Medical Association proposed the revalidation last January there were speculations that doctors will object. But it appears that the majority like it. On the 9th of May this year all professional medical colleges and associations of SL agreed to develop a revalidation mechanism for Sri Lankan doctors. It was a historic day in the medical profession in SL. A committee called Revalidation Committee was set up for this purpose consisting of representatives from all medical bodies. This committee is given the task of developing a mechanism of revalidation.

8. What benefits would doctors get?

If doctors are to be revalidated, they have to be provided with facilities for updating. This means some kind of CPD (continuing professional development) programme for all doctors in the country should be made available. So that even the doctors who are in remote places who don't have such opportunity at the moment, will get a chance to update themselves.

9. Will doctors have to sit for an examination at the end?

No assessment or examination process is there. It is only participation in CPD activities that is required. In developed countries there is assessment, but in Sri Lanka we don't have facilities for such a comprehensive revalidation programme.

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