

comprehensive by dint of the huge number of hours worked. The huge numbers of hours were not intrinsic to the 'training system', but apologists for the old system would do well to consider how well it would perform under the constraints of the forthcoming limitations to working hours.

There was little by way of quality assurance. Even the exams in those days were subject to examiner whimsy.

People suffered great uncertainty about their futures because of the pyramidal structure of necessary promotion. In theory, if all the Senior Registrars refused to take up Consultant posts the system would come to a halt.

The system was open to discrimination: it is very likely that there were examples of poorer candidates being appointed over better ones for all the usual reasons.

Calman Training PROS

It is, in theory at least, based on achieving competencies in terms of skills, attitudes and knowledge that have been clearly laid out by the Royal College of Anaesthetists. Departments now have the template on which to base programmes that deliver training. This is perhaps the biggest shift that the Calman Report effected. People talk wistfully of the apprenticeship experience of the old system but I fail to see what aspects of apprenticeship have to be lost under the new system, save perhaps abuse. The 'syllabus' gives power to trainees by legitimising their demands for teaching and appropriate experience.

It is temporally structured such that trainees' lives are not subject to the same degree of stressful uncertainty. From the NHS's point of view, it is more or less guaranteed a regular, predictable supply of Consultants.

Training post-Calman is self-aware in a way that allows it to constantly adapt and improve. It should therefore continue to get better and better in spite of political and other obstacles to its stated goals.

CONS

It is difficult to stop people who have been given a training number getting their CCST if they are felt not to have the 'right' attitudes, for example. The necessary assessment machinery has yet to be developed to a satisfactory level of legal and educational vigour.

There is reduced opportunity to gain experience at a level commensurate with Consultant practice. This is in part due to the increased number of Consultants and move to a 'Consultant delivered service'. Trainers need to ensure that senior trainees have the opportunity to experience as many aspects of their future role as possible.

Although it is nothing to do with Calman training per se, many people see the reduction in the hours that trainees can work as its fault. This is simply not the case; it is European Union Health and Safety law. If trainees didn't need to run the NHS out of hours then the Calman system would have a much easier job.

It is not surprising that Calman training is better than what we had before; systems tend to evolve for the better. Having said that, I think there are important lessons to be learned by reflecting on the past; it often requires the passing of time before we can appreciate something that has been lost.

HEREWITH NOTICE OF A NEW SEMINAR!

September 7th will see the first outing of the GAT 'Creating Financial Security: Building Blocks for the Future' seminar. This is a one-day event organized in two parts separated considerably by lunch. The morning session covers the usual topics of superannuation, taxation, mortgages and income protection. This is your guide to managing your finances and creating those stable foundations.

In the afternoon the emphasis switches to making your money grow. Entitled 'DIY, Taking the Plunge', the topics covered include alternative investments, equities, anaesthetic inventions and investment in property / equities.

Formal notification, including application forms should be arriving through the post with the Association mail. Preliminary survey indicates that this could be a well-subscribed seminar so get your request in quick.

You have to go to make your money grow!

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