Apheresis Medicine
Physician Training
Around the World: Canada

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WAA/ASFA Annual Meeting
Graduate Medical Education Forum
Disclosures

- I have no relevant conflicts of interest
Canada

- Population 35.2 mln
- Approximately 40 centres provide therapeutic apheresis
- Approximately 14,000 procedures were performed in 2012
- 63% of procedures were performed by 5 centres
- Hematology, Neurology and Nephrology diagnoses accounted for 64% of all indications

Data from CAG annual meeting 2013
Canadian Apheresis Group

- Voluntary national organization of therapeutic apheresis physicians in Canada

Goals

- To collect and share data on therapeutic procedures
- To provide liaison with other apheresis societies
- To promote research
- To provide education
- To promote best practices
Canada

- Universal healthcare
- Healthcare is the responsibility of provincial governments
  - heterogeneity in coverage and services
- No national or provincial standards related to apheresis
- No national or provincial accreditation program
  - Some plasmapheresis units elected to participate in accreditation by the AABB (American Association of Blood Banks) or FACT (Foundation for Accreditation of Cellular Therapy)
Therapeutic Apheresis Medical Directors by Specialty

Number of Physicians per Specialty

- Hematology
- Nephrology
- Clinical Pathology
- Internal Medicine
Training programs for future apheresis physicians

- Objectives of Training as per Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (RCPSC)
  - Hematology (2009) – sub-specialty
    - No mention of apheresis
  - Nephrology (2012) – sub-specialty
    - For the procedures not necessarily performed by nephrologists, describe the risks and benefits and appropriately recommend plasmapheresis
Training programs for future apheresis physicians

- Apheresis is not a core rotation in either Hematology or Nephrology training programs
- Apheresis is not consistently listed as an elective rotation in either of the specialities
- Is training provided by didactic sessions only?
Other training programs for future apheresis physicians

- Transfusion Medicine – RCPSC area of focused competence (2012)
  - Demonstrate effective and appropriate performance of therapeutic procedures relevant to transfusion medicine practice
    - Supervise apheresis
- Hospital-based fellowships
  - No information
Continuing Medical Education

Possible options
  - Annual conferences
    - Canadian Apheresis Group (CAG), ASFA, WAA
    - Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine, AABB
  - Courses (U.S.A.)
  - Journals
    - Journal of Clinical Apheresis, Transfusion and Apheresis Science, Transfusion
  - Webinars (ASFA), local rounds
Apheresis MD Training

- Most training likely happens on the job
  - Formal vs. informal apprenticeship/mentorship
- How much training is provided vs. needed to produce a competent apheresis physician?
- How much CME is done vs. needed to maintain competency?
- Is there a need for a formal competency assessment to qualify and then to continue to practice?
MD Education Survey

1. What is your specialty?
   1. Nephrology, Hematology, Pathology, Other

2. Did you receive formal training in therapeutic apheresis prior to starting your job?
   1. No, I learned on the job
   2. Yes
      1. If yes, please specify: Elective rotation, Core rotation, Course, Fellowship in apheresis, Other

3. I maintain competency in therapeutic apheresis by:
   1. Reading relevant journals
   2. Attending relevant annual conferences (ASFA, CAG, WAA, AABB, other)
   3. Taking a course (please specify)
   4. Participating in webinars
   5. Attending rounds
   6. Reading textbooks
   7. Other
MD Education Survey

- Survey was prepared using Survey Monkey
- Link sent by e-mail to all MD members of the CAG (not limited to medical directors)
- Results are pending
Instead of Conclusion: A Call to Action

■ More formal training for sub-specialists likely to be involved in apheresis – hematology and nephrology
  ▪ More formal training for sub-specialists most likely to refer patients for apheresis (ex. Neurology)

■ Creation of a competency assessment to qualify or to guide CME/continue to practice

■ An opportunity for collaboration?