

Developing an International Centre for Renal Training – an example from the North West

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Introduction

International renal societies such as the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the European Renal Association (ERA) support a wide international network and provide an efficient platform for timely scientific exchange and dissemination between healthcare professionals around the world. Work in Global Nephrology reveals the disparity between the developing and developed worlds in the research, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of kidney disease. The ISN supports several programmes, initiatives and partnerships that help to reduce the incidence and impact of kidney disease worldwide. Here, we describe the multifaceted approach taken by our department to develop an International Centre for Renal Training.

Centre Background

Our department provides a comprehensive regional service, serving a catchment population of approximately 1.6 million. The Directorate comprises a central dialysis hub and six satellite dialysis units, with approximately 500 patients undergoing in-centre haemodialysis and 100 receiving home therapy (both peritoneal and home haemo-dialysis). The Directorate supports acute dialysis, plasma exchange, interventional radiology and vascular access, and undertakes approximately 200 renal biopsies per year. It also provides living and deceased donor transplant workup and is responsible for the follow up of an excess of 750 renal transplant recipients.

Evolving as an International Centre for Renal Training

In 2012 the Renal department became involved in Global Nephrology, with the aim of building links, collaborating and creating networks with other Renal units, particularly from low income GDP countries. With the support of ISN and ERA we have identified four main aspects that are the base for developing an International Centre for Renal Training, and comprise of:

A- The ISN Fellowship Programme; where physicians from low resource countries spend time in the host centre with the ultimate goal of improving the standards of care in their home countries upon their return. Since 2013; 12 fellows from seven countries (Egypt, Sudan, Israel, Croatia, Bosnia, Kazakhstan and Nigeria) have visited for 3-6 months each.

B- The Sister Renal Centre Programme; supported by the ISN, in 2014 our department twined with Tuzla, Bosnia and by 2019 had successfully progressed to achieve top Level A collaboration status, with many achievements for both centres and mutual exchange of experiences.

C- The ISN Renal CME and Educational Ambassadors Programme; where Nephrologists from our department have visited centres in developing countries for specific hands-on training and support developing new skills or services needed in those centres.

D- Innovation in Teaching; since 2012 the Renal Directorate has developed three key international Renal courses which are based on practical and applied teaching; with UK and International representation for both faculty and delegates. Attendees have hailed from more than 48 countries across five continents, with courses covering renal biopsy technique, applied Nephrology and peritoneal dialysis access insertion.

Conclusion

Since 2012 our Renal department has worked to support as well as build links and collaborate with several other worldwide Renal centres. We have identified four key areas around which to develop an International Centre for Renal Training, and hope to explore further methods and expand services in the future.