

International Perspectives on Training in Addiction Medicine

Edited by
Paul Steven Haber



International Perspectives on Training in Addiction Medicine

The use of alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceutical drugs, illicit drugs and other substances is widespread throughout the world and is amongst the leading causes of disability and death. Increasingly, medical approaches of treating these disorders have established themselves as effective interventions and are of great interest to those who seek help.

Addiction medicine is a new medical specialty that focuses on the treatment of disorders of substance abuse and related diseases. It occupies a unique place amongst the medical specialties, connecting mental and physical health. The field of addiction medicine is growing heavily as the range of treatments and resulting professional interest and structured training evolve together.

This volume describes training programs established in Europe, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific regions, and thus will assist local training programs in incorporating the best ideas worldwide. It has been developed with the support of the International Society of Addiction Medicine and is a significant milestone in the development of addiction medicine. It will play an important role in establishing standards of training and consequently of practice, leading in turn to better patient care and health outcomes.

This book is based on a special issue of *Substance Abuse*.

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Nady el-Guebaly and Claudio Violato

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Paul S. Haber and Bridin P. Murnion

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Introduction: International Perspectives in Postgraduate Medical Training in Addiction Medicine

Paul S. Haber

This special issue of *Substance Abuse* reviews postgraduate training programs for addiction medicine and their development in several model countries. It is an opportune time for this review, as a key step in the evolution of addiction medicine as a discrete medical specialty is the development of an appropriately trained workforce, and in turn, a training program for this purpose. Accreditation of a new specialty critically involves review of its training program, making it all the more important to establish these programs early on. At the same time, establishment of a defined training program plays a significant role in defining the scope of practice for the specialty. Until recently, there were few structured training programs for addiction medicine in any country so that clinicians gained skills in an ad hoc manner through experience, from reading the literature, and from senior colleagues. The scene is now changing rapidly. Structured training for specialists in addiction medicine is now established in several countries, and is under development in many others.

Development of a specialist training program requires careful consideration of a range of issues including admission criteria, content of training, particularly taking regional substance use problems and expectations regarding approaches to treatment, approaches to learning, assessment, and the nature of any ongoing learning or recredentialing. These must also match local requirements and expectations for a medical specialist training program.

The admission criteria to training vary enormously from those countries, the majority, that have no specific requirements beyond being a registered medical practitioner, to those with rather specific requirements. For example, the Australian program is auspiced by the Royal Australian College of Physicians and admission to addiction medicine training is regarded as advanced training that can only be undertaken after completing an approved