

YOU SHOULD TRY THIS!

Bridging residency and practice: a final-year pediatric curriculum

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Implication Statement

The start of independent clinical practice is an exciting—but often daunting—milestone for newly minted physicians. To better support practice readiness, our postgraduate training program created a learner-centered, longitudinal transition-to-practice curriculum for final-year residents. The curriculum covers a spectrum of key early career topics, which are delivered through diverse educational formats. While nothing can completely prepare new practitioners for their first months of independent practice, we hope our approach offers valuable insights for other centres helping trainees to navigate this professional threshold with greater confidence.

Transition vers la pratique : un curriculum pédiatrique destiné aux résidents en dernière année

Énoncé des implications de la recherche

Le début de la pratique clinique autonome constitue une étape à la fois passionnante et souvent intimidante pour les médecins nouvellement diplômés. Afin de mieux préparer les résidents à l'exercice autonome de leur profession, notre programme de formation postdoctorale a mis en place un curriculum longitudinal de transition vers la pratique, centré sur l'apprenant et destiné aux résidents en dernière année. Ce curriculum couvre un large éventail de thèmes clés liés au début de carrière, présentés selon divers formats pédagogiques. Bien que rien ne puisse complètement préparer les résidents pour le début de la pratique autonome, nous espérons que notre approche offrira des pistes utiles à d'autres centres souhaitant accompagner les stagiaires dans cette transition professionnelle avec davantage de confiance.

Introduction

The transition from residency to independent practice is an exciting, but stressful time for new physicians. They must quickly adopt new identities, shoulder new responsibilities, adjust to unfamiliar settings, and provide high-quality care for conditions they may have encountered infrequently during training.¹⁻³ Training programs have struggled to fully prepare graduates for these demands,⁴ yet the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's shift to Competence By Design has placed renewed focus on this critical period.⁵ In response, we took advantage of a concurrent change in the pediatric qualification exam timeline⁶ to incorporate a novel transition to practice curriculum for our 15 final-year pediatric residents.

Description of the innovation

The curriculum consisted of 14 sessions delivered over seven months (October 2024–April 2025) during academic half-days. Its development was informed by: Royal College objectives and entrustable professional activities;^{7,8} experiential accounts; literature describing the needs of early-career pediatricians (ECPs); and focus groups with our program's current residents and recent graduates. We identified relevant curricular topics, including: professional identity formation; job applications, practice management, and financial literacy; educational skills (e.g., feedback, clinical teaching, mentoring); integration of non-clinical work (e.g., quality improvement, research, advocacy); patient safety; leadership; rare but important clinical topics (e.g., serious illness conversations, child maltreatment); and common community-based conditions (e.g., attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), mental health disorders). Although we initially identified subjects such as work-life balance as important, they were ultimately excluded, as residents felt these issues were more effectively addressed elsewhere in the curriculum (e.g., through wellness programming). Teaching modalities included lectures, panel presentations, "Ask Me Anything" sessions, interactive workshops, and simulation. Sessions were designed to: a) promote informal discus-

sion; b) incorporate ECPs as facilitators; and c) reflect the diversity of practice contexts—from quaternary care centres to community hospitals—by offering content from practitioners across the province.

Outcomes

Residents evaluated 11/14 sessions immediately after their completion on a three-point scale (below average/average/above average) for: presenter engagement; appropriateness for training level; and achievement of learning objectives (Table 1). All but one session (medico-legal overview) scored above average across all areas. Written comments were positive. Sessions with direct clinical relevance—child protection, serious illness conversations, advanced airway provision, ADHD management, and patient safety—were well-received. Topics such as mentorship, systems-level advocacy, education leadership, and identity transition also rated highly. Residents' narrative feedback (Appendix A) suggested that the curriculum may be more applicable to those entering consultant general practice rather than subspecialty fellowships.

Suggestions for next steps

Centering residents and ECPs as partners in the design process appears to ensure that a) learners recognize the curriculum's importance and b) the content is relevant. While early evaluations are promising, the curriculum's long-term impact remains unknown. We plan to conduct follow-up interviews with participants 18 months into practice to assess whether its utility is sustained. Ultimately, no curriculum can fully eliminate the challenges of entering independent practice, as "it takes time for attendings to settle in."^{9(p.1914)} However, by providing targeted, practical preparation informed and facilitated by ECPs, this innovation may provide insights to other postgraduate training programs seeking to ease residents' transition to independent practice and equip them with the skills and confidence to begin the next phase of their professional journey.

Table 1. Quantitative evaluation data of sessions

Session	Presentations	Number of Responses	Post-Session Eval Mean Score (out of 3)
Professional Identity	Overview of Curriculum/Identity Formation in Transition	10	2.90
	Early-Career Pediatrician Panel	11	2.91
Serious Illness Conversations	3-hour workshop	9	2.89
Community-focused Behavioural & Mental Health	ADHD Management	6	3.00
	Supporting Children with Autism	5	2.60
	Pediatric Mental Health	5	2.80
Systems-Level Health Advocacy	Health Care Systems	8	2.75
	Health Equity Policies	7	3.00
	Health Advocacy Panel	7	2.86
Advanced Airway Course	3-hour workshop (neonatal/infant intubation)	4	3.00
Finding/Applying for Positions	Preparing Job Applications	0 (eval form not sent out in error)	N/A
	Negotiating Contracts		
	Job Opportunities		
Teaching & Mentoring as New Faculty	Entrustment & Feedback	9	2.89
	Learners in Difficulty	9	2.78
	Mentorship	8	2.88
Patient Safety	3-hour workshop	5	3.00
Non-Clinical Aspects of Professional Life	Education Leadership	9	3.00
	Research/Quality Improvement	6	3.00
	Community Site Leadership	7	2.71
Child Protection	3-hour workshop	7	3.00
Career Development/ Wellness	3-hour workshop	0	N/A
Financial Aspects	Financial Management & Fee-for-Service Billing (two overlapping sessions)	4	2.75
Starting Out as New Practitioner	Medico-Legal Overview	3	2.00
	Starting a New Practice Panel	3	3.00
	College of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia	2	3.00
Physicians As Leaders	Department Head/Deputy Head Presentation on Leadership	0 (eval form not sent out in error)	N/A

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Appendix A. Exemplar narrative feedback for sessions

Session	Presentations	Exemplar Narrative Feedback
Professional Identity	Overview of Curriculum/Identity Formation in Transition	“Very informal discussion that created open forum to voice thoughts.”
	Early-Career Pediatrician Panel	“Presenters were honest and engaged. Gave real examples of struggles and success.”
Serious Illness Conversations	3-hour workshop	“Great practical session. Excellent resources for practice. Appreciated the integration of an entrustable professional activity.”
Community-focused Behavioural & Mental Health	ADHD Management	“Great discussion on long-term goals of ADHD and alternate med use.”
	Supporting Children with Autism	“It may have been nice to be more general/clinical in nature.”
	Pediatric Mental Health	“Enjoyed open forum, helpful at the end of our training—excellent pharmacology overview.”
Systems-Level Health Advocacy	Health Care Systems	“Incredibly insightful, lots to think about regarding structure of healthcare, and who wields power in the system.”
	Health Equity Policies	“Excellent discussion analyzing a current policy that is highly problematic, food for thought on a number of structures we currently employ.”
	Health Advocacy Panel	“I loved this panel. Great to hear from folks that have embedded advocacy into their practice.”
Advanced Airway Course	3-hour workshop (neonatal/infant intubation)	“I feel much better about difficult airways. I learned great tips for intubation I probably should have learned three years ago.”
Finding/Applying for Positions	Preparing Job Applications	N/A
	Negotiating Contracts	
	Job Opportunities	
Teaching & Mentoring as New Faculty	Entrustment & Feedback	“Honest conversation about the realities of being a new staff. Addressed the questions most of us have about shared worries.”
	Working With Learners in Difficulty	“Covered a topic I haven’t had formal teaching in previously—massively helpful.”
	Mentorship	“Clarified the mystique of mentorship—gave insight into the specific roles mentors have.”
Patient Safety	3-hour workshop	“Loved the group work aspect of this session and appreciated that the problems in each case were issues we see all the time in our clinical work.”
Non-Clinical Aspects of Professional Life	Education Leadership	“Super informative! Incredibly helpful to glimpse med ed career paths with loads of practical advice.”
	Research/Quality Improvement	“Really helpful to see real-life work schedule with QI projects and research.”
	Community Site Leadership	“Great discussion and dialogue about admin roles in medicine with applied, practical insights.”
Child Protection	3-hour workshop	“Amazing session—real and interactive. Elaborated on our worries as future staff.”
Career Development/ Wellness	3-hour workshop	N/A
Financial Aspects	Financial Management & Fee-for-Service Billing (two overlapping sessions)	“I loved these sessions—going through billing codes was super helpful/practical, and the shared slides will be a great resource once we go out into practice.”
Starting Out as New Practitioner	Medico-Legal Overview	“The session was helpful, but I did not feel it met the stated learning objectives.”

	Starting a New Practice Panel	“Excellent session. Lots of very helpful, practical advice for practice setup & management.”
	College of Physicians & Surgeons of British Columbia	“So helpful to get a sense of how college complaints work and to put faces to the names we would be in contact with if we needed support.”
Physicians As Leaders	Department Head/Deputy Head Presentation on Leadership	N/A