

Promoting Diversity and Excellence in Research within the Graduate Mentorship Research Program (GMRP)

Amir Hassankhani, Melika Amoukhteh, Liesl S. Eibschutz, Sara Aghabaklou, Ali Gholamrezanezhad

Department of Radiology, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, CA, USA.

Introduction

- Foreign medical graduates (FMGs) have long been a valuable asset to universities in the United States, bringing expertise and diverse perspectives. However, they face challenges in navigating the US healthcare system and meeting residency program expectations, often leading to unemployment or underemployment.
- Post-doctorate research fellowships, while promising, sometimes fail to meet expectations, leaving FMGs uncertain about their future success.
- To address these issues, the Graduate Mentorship Research Program (GMRP) is proposed. This program aims to provide FMGs with one-on-one mentorship, research and clinical shadowing experiences, and exposure to advanced technology, facilitating their integration into the US healthcare field. Additionally, the program can address the shortage of clinicians and researchers in the country.

The Dilemma

- Postdoctoral fellowships serve as a crucial transition for medical school graduates into their professional careers, aiming to enhance their skills under mentorship. Despite a significant number of temporary visa holders serving as postdoctoral fellows in the US, there is no standardized procedure for pairing them with research laboratories and grants. Obtaining these positions is challenging, often reliant on connections or recommendations, and FMGs may face additional obstacles such as language barriers or lack of research skills.
- On the other hand, many research principal investigators have abundant ideas but lack the workforce or funding to execute projects. Universities may resist hiring research assistants without official employee status and accompanying compensation and benefits.
- Furthermore, medical graduates with diverse backgrounds and an interest in radiology strive for prestigious postdoctoral research positions in this field. However, many radiology departments lack a centralized system for accepting fellowship applications, leading to delays and difficulties for applicants in the application process.

The Process

- The GMRP committee, comprised of research principal investigators, clinical radiologists, the vice chair of research, and the vice chair of diversity, collaborates to generate research ideas and projects.
- Applicants undergo interviews and trial assignments to assess their scientific aptitude, statistical skills, and English proficiency.
- Selected candidates are assigned to projects and monitored through regular follow-up sessions and mentoring. They meet with the full committee twice a year and have monthly meetings with mentors to guide their career goals.
- The GMRP offers selected candidates a one-year research experience, extendable based on interest and evaluation. Scholars receive specialized courses such as Medical English, Introduction to Clinical Research, and Basics of Clinical Statistics. Clinical shadowing experiences are available for interested candidates to familiarize them with the US hospital environment. Upon completion, scholars receive an academic certificate in clinical research scholarship.

Collaborative enrichment

- Collaboration with prestigious organizations like the American College of Radiology (ACR) and the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) presents significant enrichment opportunities within the GMRP. This collaboration offers access to established research committees and programs, particularly the ACR Commission on Research and the RSNA Research & Education Foundation. These organizations provide guidance on research proposals, funding opportunities, educational resources, and mentorship programs tailored for early-career researchers. Through collaboration, GMRP participants gain valuable guidance, mentorship, and feedback on their research proposals, as well as assistance in identifying suitable research projects aligned with their interests.
- GMRP leadership and mentors can engage with the ACR and RSNA in various ways to maximize benefits for scholars. They can explore available grants, develop tailored grant opportunities, facilitate participation in conferences, and establish joint mentoring programs. Regular communication channels ensure ongoing updates and sharing of relevant information, fostering a positive and mutually beneficial relationship while creating further collaboration opportunities in the future.

Conclusion

The GMRP serves as a bridge connecting skilled physicians with research programs, offering mentorship, research development, clinical shadowing, and exposure to advanced technology. It plays a crucial role in helping immigrant clinicians acclimate to the US healthcare system while also boosting research funding, publication output, and institutional reputation. Collaboration with organizations like the ACR and the RSNA enriches the program by providing guidance, resources, networking, and collaboration opportunities for participants. Ultimately, the GMRP aims to improve healthcare through innovation and the integration of knowledge.

References

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