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Is there a need for a fellowship-advisor for orthopaedic surgeons? Analysis of 543 surveys from my-fellowship.com, a Swiss online platform

Introduction: Fellowships are common in many countries, whereas other countries do not offer special training after residency. Therefore many doctors seek for a fellowship after completing their residency. Fellowships became an essential part of professional medical training. Finding a suitable fellowship is essential. Physicians and institutions may have different expectations regarding fellowships, which can lead to frustration and wasted resources for both. One obstacle for doctors is finding reliable feedback from previous fellows regarding a specific fellowship and being able to contact that person for further advice. In addition, for both doctors and institutions alike, financing a fellowship can also prove a challenge.

Methods: A website was created as well as a 1 minute survey. The project was initiated during an International Orthopaedic and Trauma meeting in Switzerland. Moreover, the website was posted frequently on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and a newsletter explaining the project was sent to 1749 doctors worldwide per e-mail.

Results: 3.5 months after the project initiation there were 6396 visits (5287 new users) to the website

Biography

Mohy Taha is a board-certified and fellowship trained orthopaedic surgeon in Basel-Switzerland, with extensive training in shoulder and elbow surgery. He is an author, a speaker and the founder of My-Fellowship.com. He finished his medical school in Egypt, accomplished his training in Switzerland and completed 5 fellowships and 9 Observer ships in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany and USA. In 2013, he was looking for fellowships to further his training. He visited 13 clinics in Australia to find a suitable fellowship that matches his training needs. During his fellowship in 2016 he met some peers who were not satisfied with their fellowships. The idea of a platform that can bridge the gap between fellowship offers and fellows' expectations was born.

from 124 countries, mainly USA (31.3%), Switzerland (20.4%), Egypt (5.5%) and India (4.2%). 543 surveys from participants from 72 countries were completed: Switzerland (25.4%), Egypt (7.4%), India (6.6%) as well as United Kingdom (5.5%), United States (4.4%), Colombia (4.1%) and Brazil (3.9%). The main specialties were Orthopaedic & Traumatology (61.8%), General Surgery (8.1%) and Internal Medicine (4.1%). Most of the participants were potential fellows (38.5%), previous fellows (31.7%) or individuals and/or institutions who would like to offer a fellowship (17.9%). The participants were mainly interested in a fellowship database (72.6%), connecting to other fellows (65.4%), and giving/receiving feedback about a fellowship (51.9%) or receiving financial support (37.9%).

Conclusion: The results of the first surveys suggest that there is an interest in an online fellowship advisor including a database for fellowships worldwide, a platform for fellows to connect to each other with the ability to give and receive feedback about a fellowship. Accordingly an IT company was assigned to build the platform with the needs of doctors and institutes in mind. Financing a fellowship remains a challenge for many participants.

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