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Family medicine training in Portugal

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Background & Aim: Family Medicine was first recognized as a medical specialization in Portugal in 1990. Since then, the training programme has been the object of some revisions, the last of which was done in February 2015. The authors intend to show the structure of the current programme.

Method: We researched official documents from the Portuguese Ministry of Health such as Portaria n° 45/2015 and also documents issued by the Regional Coordination of Family Medicine Training.

Results: in Portugal, Family Medicine Training lasts 4 years (48 months), divided between obligatory internships, optional internships and there is also the possibility of doing short internships, in order to acquire specific competences.

Obligatory internships:

Family Medicine 1 and 2: 14 months

Women's Health: 2 months

Mental Health: 2 months

Pediatrics: 2 months

Emergency Medicine (Internal Medicine, Minor Surgery and Orthopedics): 12 hours/week, for 10 months

Optional internships: 6 months

Family Medicine 3: 7 months

Family Medicine 4: 11 months

The final evaluation consists of a curricular evaluation, a written test with multiple choice questions and a clinical test that includes the discussion of a clinical case.

Conclusions: A Family Medicine specialist deals with all medical conditions regardless of the age, gender, or ethnicity of the patient; therefore, doing internships in other medical and surgical specialties is a fundamental step of the Family Medicine Training Programme. Obligatory internships in Family Medicine allow each trainee doctor to make a self-evaluation in order to identify gaps in his knowledge and therefore, choose optional internships in secondary care to acquire useful skills for clinical practice. On the other hand, Women's Health, Mental Health and Pediatrics are a requirement for all trainee doctors in Portugal because Family Doctors are also responsible for pregnancy surveillance, family planning/contraception, children's health surveillance and diagnosis and treatment of many Psychiatric conditions.