

# Certification of Specialists and Maintenance of Certification / Revalidation: Urgent process for Iraq Health Care Reform

Talha Al-Shawaf MB,ChB, FRCS(ED), FRCOG  
Consultant Gynaecologist  
Barts and The London NHS Trust.  
Honorary Senior Lecturer  
Queen Mary University, London

# Improving patient care for now and the future

- The health care in Iraq is largely reliant toward a private funded care.
- More patients see private doctors and trust the private system than the Public / Government .
- Patients go to Specialists for their care even for the slightest ailments.
- Iraq medical care has been in a real difficult state for decades.
- It is important to put in place a system to improve present health care.

# Reforming the Health Care at Specialist Level in Iraq

- Decades of neglect
- Very limited Primary Care
- Hunger for knowledge and improvement at all levels specially at Specialists grade level
-

# Reforming the Health Care at Specialist Level in Iraq

- The Specialists Manpower in Iraq is the greatest asset of the health system.
- It represent a substantial % of financial expenditure from the Health budget.

# The Challenge to Reform

- The manpower supporting the health system at specialist level, require a fundamental development and reform.
- The Specialists running the Health Care at present need to be at a standard of medical experience appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- This will be in the public interest.
- It will provide a system fit for purpose.

# The Challenge to Reform

Modernising the Specialist level of medical service is cost effective and will be a financial saving programme long term.

# Training Needs for Iraq

In teaching and training medical staff there are 3 areas in need of simultaneous updating to present day standards:

- Medical colleges and Allied Medical schools.
- Entry to specialists training as Board , Royal Colleges etc exams (all specialities including Primary Care). Certification.
- Post specialisation maintenance of certification / revalidation and Advanced Skills Training.

Nursing

# The Challenge to Reform

- Certification
- Advanced Skills Training
- Monitoring of Certification / Revalidation

Ref. GMC and ABMS publications



# Certification: When did it start?

1908 – Dr. Derrick T. Vail, Sr. presidential address to the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology

“... and if he sound competent let him then be permitted and licensed to practice ophthalmology.”\*

Led to setting the standards for the certification process to enable the delivery of safe, quality patient care

\*ABMS

# Certification

- A process designed to document that physician specialists, certified by a Body, maintain the necessary competencies to provide quality patient care
- The Body promotes continuous lifelong learning for better patient care

# Certification

- Medical specialty certification can be voluntary or mandatory.
- While medical licensure sets the minimum competency requirements to diagnose and treat patients, it is not specialty specific.
- Certification Body (RC & AB) demonstrate a physician's exceptional expertise in a particular specialty and/or subspecialty of medical practice.

# The support process

- Certified doctors have commitment and expertise in consistently achieving superior clinical outcomes in a responsive, patient-focused setting.
- Patients, physicians, healthcare providers, insurers and quality organisations look for the Certification as the best measure of a physician's knowledge, experience and skills to provide quality healthcare within a given specialty.

# Six General Competencies

- Medical knowledge
- Patient care
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Professionalism
- Practice-based learning and improvement
- Systems-based practice

ABMS

# Four Components

## 1) Professional standing (licensure)

Hold a valid, unrestricted medical license

## 2) Lifelong learning and self-assessment

Evidence of participation

Specialists are expected to conform to general and specialty-specific standards

## 3) Cognitive expertise (examination)

Covers the scope and range of the discipline

Is clinically relevant

## 4) Practice performance assessment

Proven scientific, educational and assessment methodology

Reflects patient care and should result in quality improvement

Collaborative efforts with other organizations

# Certification

Certification, by must, involves a rigorous process of testing and peer evaluation that is designed and administered by specialists in the specific area of medicine.

# Certification: Benefits for Physicians

- Improve patient, staff and physician satisfaction
- Improve effectiveness and efficiency of practice
- Reduce duplicate assessments and applications
- Improve learning opportunities based on practice needs
- Minimize re-licensure difficulties



# Assurance to Public

- **Certification: An Added Measure of Expertise**  
Provides assurance of a specialist doctor expertise in a particular specialty and/or subspecialty .

# Advanced Training Skills Modules (ATSMs)

- Contains the basic elements for safe practice for consultants of the future.
- The core curriculum must be **supported by increased expertise in certain defined areas by the acquisition of Advanced Training Skills Modules (ATSMs)**

# Advanced Skills Training Modules (ASTM)

- ASTMs have been designed based on the skills required by the consultant / specialist of the future.
- Collecting a wide range of unrelated skills is no longer possible and realistic within the time frame of training and some of the skills may not be put to use.
- It is important to choose ASTMs based on the kind of consultant post that the trainee would like to do,
- bearing in mind the likely job descriptions of the posts.

# Advanced Skills Training Modules (ASTM)

- The modules have been designed to equip trainees with the skills they will need for independent practice at consultant / specialist level.
- The signing up of the competences must NOT be a tick-box exercise.
- Many of the competences will be attained during service commitments and it will be rare for time to be ring fenced for their completion.
- The trainee will simply need to spend more time in the relevant clinical area and will obtain training while providing a service.

# MOC IN US

- A program of periodic recertification (every six to 10 years) was initiated to ensure physicians engaged in continuing education and examination to keep current in their specialty.
- 24 Member Boards adopted a new gold standard for recertification with a continuous ABMS Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program for all specialties.
- MOC uses evidence-based guidelines and national standards and best practices in combination with customized continuing education so physicians demonstrate their leadership in the national movement for healthcare quality.
- MOC also requires proof of continuing education and experience in between testing for re-certification.

# Why Certification and Maintenance of Certification important to the medical profession and the public

- The Certification program, an ongoing process of education and assessment for certified doctors to improve practice performance.
- Maintenance of Certification has encouraged and inspired these certified specialists to improve their practice and meet the healthcare needs of our time.
- MOC benefits both physicians and patients to ensure fewer medical errors, better communication and quality clinical outcomes.
- The six core competencies in specialty medicine and four-part MOC process ensures continuous learning
- The process is aligned with credentialing requirements by key major medical associations that regulate the practice of medicine.
- Certified specialists use best practices, tools and peer idea exchange to efficiently promote and inform others in your medical specialty.

- MOC Is the Path.
- Better Care Is the Destination.
- Certification Matters.
- And ultimately, the measure of physician specialists is not merely that they have been certified, but how well they keep current in their specialty.

# Recertification

- Recertification programs is one of continuous professional development.
- A doctor is committed to lifelong learning and competency in a specialty and/or subspecialty by requiring ongoing measurement of a core competencies.
- Measurement of these competencies happens in a variety of ways, some of which vary according to the specialty.
- This is designed to keep certification continuous.



# Why there is a need for continuous recertification?

## Patient Care

- Provide care that is compassionate, appropriate and effective treatment for health problems and to promote health.

## Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Demonstrate skills that result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their families and professional associates (e.g. fostering a therapeutic relationship that is ethically sound; uses effective listening skills with non-verbal and verbal communication; working as both a team member and at times as a leader).

## Medical Knowledge

- Demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical and cognate sciences and their application in patient care.

## Professionalism

- Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to diverse patient populations.

## Practice-based Learning

- Able to investigate and evaluate their patient care practices, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence and improve their practice of medicine.

## Systems-based Practice

- Demonstrate awareness of and responsibility to larger context and systems of healthcare. Be able to call on system resources to provide optimal care (e.g. coordinating care across sites or serving as the primary case manager when care involves multiple specialties, professions or sites).

**“Education is central to MOC for both doctors AND patients. Knowledgeable, skilled doctors can continue to provide quality care. Informed patients can make better healthcare choices.”**

**We have to be accountable for the health care we are providing.”**

**we can show we are in fact doing the right things for our patients according to the guidelines and standards of care set by the profession.”**

**it as ongoing continuing medical education.”**

**ultimately improves your practice.”**

**“Participating in MOC is an excellent experience that I am glad to be involved with.”**

**“Physicians as a group must take the lead in the improvement of healthcare. We have a duty to the patients we see to deliver increasingly better care and demonstrate this improvement to the many stakeholders in healthcare.”**

**“Fostering the habits of lifelong learning will be a critical success factor for physicians in the future. The pace of change driven by disruptive technologies, economics and societal change is incredibly fast. Physicians will need to actively keep up, or be left behind.”**

**"maintain the level of knowledge needed for practice that we demonstrated when we were first certified“**

**“Look at the good things that are coming out of Maintenance of Certification. It’s a chance to assess your performance, improve your practice and to feel good about the fact that what you are doing is up to speed and best for your patients.”**

**“ I keep looking and I keep striving to learn more and do better so that each year I’m a better than I was the year before.”**

**“To patients, board certification insures a certain level of quality by the people that are going to be overseeing their care.**

**“Knowing that board certification is a living, ongoing process, and not a one-time exercise, will reassure patients that the quality oversight process is timely and continuous.”**

# American Board Medical Specialities

## Maintenance of certification

- ABMS MOC® acknowledges the growth and complexity of medical science, clinical care and the importance of the physician's relationship with the patient in delivering quality clinical outcomes. It also requires proof that a physician has the practice-related knowledge to provide quality care in a particular specialty.
- MOC is also a professional response to the need for public accountability and transparency. Through MOC, physicians demonstrate that they can assess the quality of care they provide compared to peers and national benchmarks and then apply the best evidence or consensus recommendations to improve that care.
- Through a program of lifelong learning and on-going self-assessment, board certified physicians demonstrate their rigorous commitment to achieving quality clinical outcomes for patients in a responsive, patient-focused setting

# The Benefits of MOC

- Physicians benefit from participating in MOC because they receive focused learning based on individual practice needs, increase efficiency and reduce malpractice.
- Patients experience fewer medical errors, better communication and quality clinical outcomes when they choose a certified physician.
- Medical specialists who participate in MOC use the most current evidence-based guidelines and standards in their specialty and are widely recognized as leaders in the national movement for healthcare quality.
- In fact, MOC is recognized as an important quality marker by insurers, hospitals, quality and credentialing organizations as well as the federal government.
- Through the MOC program, certified physicians advance the standard of specialty medical care nationwide.
- Higher standards mean better care.

# Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program for all specialties.

## About the Six Core Competencies

- **Patient Care**-Provide care that is compassionate, appropriate and effective treatment for health problems and to promote health.
- **Medical Knowledge**-Demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical and cognate sciences and their application in patient care.
- **Interpersonal and Communication Skills**-Demonstrate skills that result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their families and professional associates (e.g. fostering a therapeutic relationship that is ethically sound, uses effective listening skills with non-verbal and verbal communication; working as both a team member and at times as a leader).
- **Professionalism**-Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to diverse patient populations.
- **Systems-based Practice**-Demonstrate awareness of and responsibility to larger context and systems of healthcare. Be able to call on system resources to provide optimal care (e.g. coordinating care across sites or serving as the primary case manager when care involves multiple specialties, professions or sites).
- **Practice-based Learning and Improvement**-Able to investigate and evaluate their patient care practices, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence and improve their practice of medicine.

# Revalidation in UK

- Revalidation is the process by which licensed doctors will demonstrate that they remain up to date and fit to practise.
- The purpose of revalidation is to assure patients and the public, employers and other healthcare professionals that licensed doctors are up to date and fit to practise.

# In UK

The successful introduction of revalidation is a shared responsibility involving the GMC, the health departments in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the medical Royal Colleges, the medical profession and the Revalidation Support Team (RST), working with the NHS and other employers in the UK.

# Propositions to be considered for an Iraqi Certification Authority



# Propositions to be considered for an Iraqi Certification Authority

- 1. Establish a certifying group (s) enforced by Government / Ministry of Health ( Members: Government , Medical college, WHO, RCs, ABMS , and others).

# Propositions to be considered for an Iraqi Certification Authority

- 2. Certify all those holding higher degrees as Board, RC, AB etc. and establish a register for publication.

# Propositions to be considered for an Iraqi Certification Authority

3. Give 2-3 years for recertification.
4. Ask for completion of ASTM to be completed during that period for those with interest, and establish them as a pre request for those requesting certification as new consultant.

# Propositions to be considered for an Iraqi Certification Authority

- 5. Put requirements for recertification / revalidation to be enforced