

MY CPSP-HSE SCHOLARSHIP JOURNEY

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INTRODUCTION

I graduated from Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Lahore in 2016 and in January 2018 after passing FCPS Part (I) in Psychiatry, I started my fellowship training at Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Karachi under the supervision of Meritorious Prof. Muhammad Iqbal Afridi.

ELIGIBILITY

I applied for the HSE-CPSP ((Health Service Executive- College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan) Scholarship program, which is roughly announced every year in December. The selection criteria in brief is one needs to have cleared their Intermediate Module of FCPS, IELTS (International English language test system) or OET (Occupational English Test). For IELTS, the required score is 6.5 in each category, i.e. reading, listening, speaking and writing, and a total score of 7.0. Whereas, the minimum score for OET is a 'B' in all categories.¹

INTERVIEW

Once the candidate meets the criteria for the scholarship, CPSP shortlists the aspirants for an interview. A panel of members ask questions regarding training, research protocol and the areas of interest in subspecialty of Psychiatry.

During my interview, when the panel enquired about my field of interest, I curtly made my choice for the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Additionally, I expressed an interest in Liaison Psychiatry.

NEXT STEP

Almost a week after the interview, I was informed that I had been selected for the training position in the Republic of Ireland. Once you accept the offer, the Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies guide throughout the process of registration with Irish Medical Council, Visa application, mandatory hotel quarantine (if applicable). The initial one-week accommodation is facilitated by the HR department of the hospital site assigned to work at.

ONGOING TRAINING STRUCTURE

The 2-year training program consists of 4 rotations, each of 6 months' duration which are according to the trainee's interest, and of course the availability of positions. During each rotation, the trainee is expected to work in the outpatient, day hospital and inpatient units, and on-call duties in the main hospital.

TRAINING EXPERIENCE

For the first 6 months of my training, I worked as a Registrar in General Adult Psychiatry, a catchment area of Connolly Hospital which is a part of Dublin North Mental Health Services. This rotation was assigned since I was new in the system and still adjusting, so it could be easier for me to work in a general adult team considering my previous experience in the same subspecialty.

I am currently working in the Liaison Psychiatry team. Our case load includes patients in different wards needing psychiatry input and patients presenting to A&E (Accidents and Emergency) department. During my training at JPMC in Karachi, I worked actively in Consultation Liaison Psychiatry while on call. The main difference I noticed between the two places is that Connolly provides a more structured work environment with regards to liaising with sector teams of patients presenting to A&E.

During training, the trainee would have supervision sessions, teaching session and a balint group² every week.

As I mentioned earlier, I am hoping to pursue Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, so I have made the training bodies aware of my preference. Thus, I will do a 6 months' rotation in the coming year.

In my experience the following are some of the Pros and Cons of the program:



PROS

- It is an excellent opportunity for acquiring an international training experience and improving your skills.
- This provides a chance of training experience in subspecialties like Child and Adolescent, Liaison, Perinatal, Intensive Psychiatric care, Rehabilitation, etc. Except for the newly introduced Child and Adolescent training program, other psychiatry subspecialties have yet to be developed in Pakistan.
- The ability to apply skills for the betterment of patients in my home country, which I believe is the sole purpose of this training program.
- This experience helps appear for the Royal College of Psychiatry UK exams and several training courses which are funded by HSE.

CONS

- One must return to Pakistan after completion of the training and cannot seek employment under HSE for at least 12 months after completion of training.

CONCLUSION

Being a part of this program has not only enhanced my skills and abilities in my specialty, but also provided an opportunity to learn more about the healthcare system in Ireland. I would recommend the young aspirants to pursue this program for a better understanding of their specialties and enhancement of their skills and knowledge.

REFERENCES:

1. <https://www.cpsp.edu.pk/HSE-CPSP-july-2022.php>
2. <https://balint.co.uk/about/introduction/>