Meeting the specific NEEDS of registrars

Within the constraints of the NHS, the way registrars are trained creates an uneasy tension between providing high-quality patient care and tuition for trainees. Furthermore, experts say that teaching is increasingly ‘being diluted … to allow the prioritisation of service provision’, at a time when it’s more important than ever to ensure that care is productive, safe and sustainable – all while providing ‘adequate learning opportunities for medical students and junior doctors’.

In short, when new registrars arrive on the ward, there can be productivity challenges. And that’s understandable. Registrars care about delivering excellent care – but think about it from their perspective: every few months, they change jobs, change city, change computer systems, change ways of working. That’s a lot to ask if you don’t provide a supportive environment focused on getting the most out of training.

Syncera, powered by Smith & Nephew, offers digital interactive solutions that efficiently support development of the knowledge and skills that help registrars feel confident and supported – all of which contribute to safe, effective orthopaedic surgical care. Registrars are the future of surgery. Syncera can help trainees and hospitals alike maximise the goals of surgical education, while minimising the impact on productivity.

Rewards of faster skills training

Workloads for junior doctors report are heavier than ever – 43% say the rate of intensity of their work is heavy or very heavy, up 2% from 2015, according to the General Medical Council. In addition, 36% of trainers reported that they don’t feel they can fulfill their educator roles in the time allotted. It’s therefore important to maximise that limited training time.

Syncera’s customisable, surgeon-specific training helps registrars know what’s needed and when, through a system that provides scoring, instant feedback and rapid improvement with real-time metrics. The learning platform is available 24/7 from any computer, so registrars can participate in learning when and where it best suits them. This approach reduces training time by up to 40% while increasing confidence in learning new procedures by up to 50% – which, in turn, has been shown to increase surgeon confidence in staff in training. Thus, in a virtuous circle, surgeon satisfaction and registrar morale benefit.

Benefit from lower error rates

Training carried out in a team-focused way – connecting registrar to surgeon by using instructional strategy aimed at improving team-based knowledge, skills, attitudes and problem-solving – could help decrease error rates by up to 19%. Furthermore, eliminating unwarranted variation is a well-recognised key to minimising errors. Routine surgery forms the bulk of surgical practice, and primary hip and knee replacements are routine elective.
procedures. Routine surgery is sometimes performed by registrars, rather than consultants, and having registrars work to specific protocols as set by consultants could be a mechanism for eliminating variation, improving outcomes and addressing the national safety agenda.

Syncera’s digital solutions are designed to standardise intraoperative processes and deliver high-quality education that contributes to lower error rates. A US-based study by orthopaedic surgeons using a cohort of 1,450 patients found implant-related errors occurred with implants 5% of the time. The authors implemented a computer based, e-tracking and compatibility system that standardised implant labelling, confirmed correct size and side (and patient), and ensured implant compatibility. The system saved valuable time and effort for surgical teams. Syncera’s automated point-of-care error checker catches potential errors before the patient goes into theatre, improving quality and potentially reducing implant-related waste by up to 85%, while reducing the chance of near-miss events.

Enhance all aspects of education
Solving the NHS’s productivity problem relies on adopting new technology and changing the way clinicians work. The same could be said of education. It’s important to remember that registrars have to learn knowledge, skills and, importantly, attitudes.

“Operative surgery is not the totality of surgical practice and that there are many other elements to surgical practice which incorporate the overall management of patients and their illness, medical treatment, communication and, probably, most importantly, an understanding of when not to operate,” writes The Surgical Forum of Great Britain and Ireland. “Being a trained surgeon is much more than being a competent technical operator.”

The ‘much more’ starts with the hospital’s and the consultants’ attitudes towards training, and the support they’re willing to lend registrars in becoming fully rounded surgeons. In fact, while the majority of registrars feel positively about the quality of their training, feeling supported in learning is the biggest concern for registrars in terms of their overall quality of education.

Total theatre support
The Berwick Report recognised that there is a need for improving both training and education to enable the NHS to become a system devoted to continual learning and improvement of patient care. Syncera is a total-operations solution that goes beyond implants to support theatres in the way that they operate, to help shape the future of surgery – registrars – in a way that saves money and time, makes training flow more smoothly, and reduces error rates. We recognise that healthcare is a team sport, and that’s why we aim to build bridges, minimise communication gaps and maximise the productivity of registrars.

For orthopaedic services striving to create an atmosphere of support that leads to outstanding, effective education and excellent patient outcomes, Syncera, powered by Smith & Nephew, provides a simplified, straightforward route. For more, visit syncera.co.uk or email Syncera: bryn.davies@syncera.com.

Summary of key points
- The way registrars are trained creates productivity challenges that can impede the delivery of high-quality patient care.
- Workloads for registrars are heavier than ever, and training systems must be adapted to maximise limited learning time.
- Innovative, team-based training enhances surgical safety, and opens communication channels between consultants and registrars.
- Interactive digital training from Syncera makes the ‘nuts and bolts’ of surgery easy, giving registrars the time and confidence to concentrate on developing skills and deepening knowledge of all aspects of surgery delivery.

References
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