A quality examination for cardiothoracic surgical care practitioners is urgently required in the United Kingdom – A multicentre study

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Background

• CT SCPs are an integral part of the surgical team.

• The education of the trainees is hugely important for ensuring the best surgical care.

• The New RCS England curriculum highlights PGDip/Masters level education but there is no final examination.

• Previous examination format.
  • 2 years in house training with a final exam in Papworth hospital.
  • 6 essay questions and 30 minute viva.
  • RCS(England) withdrew the examination 2 years.
  • Higher institution trainees continued but the in-house trainees left with no support.
Aim of this study

• To understand the trainees view.

• To understand the importance of this examination.

• To understand the transition and trainees’ experience after the withdrawal.

• To set up a quality examination (ACSA, SCTS & RCS Edinburgh).

• To set up the examination team to mould the new examination model.
Methods

- Identified 20 CT SCP trainees around the United Kingdom.
- Questionnaires were sent out to all 20 trainees.
- 16 were returned and analysed.
- Demographics and descriptive data assessed.
PGDip or Masters qualification

- Yes: 7 (44%)
- No: 9 (56%)
Reaction to exam withdrawal (RCS England)

- Shocked: 7 (44%)
- Angry: 9 (56%)
Feelings about withdrawal (RCS England)

- Worried: 4 (25%)
- Insecure about job: 7 (44%)
- Left job: 5 (31%)
Cardiac SCP exam certificate

- Safety/permission to practice
- Career progression
- Safety/permission to practice and career progression
- N/A

5 31%
3 19%
2 13%
6 37%
Feelings about sitting SCTS/ACSA RCS Edinburgh exam

- Happy: 11 (69%)
- N/A: 5 (31%)
Current viva session

- 5 (31%) N/A
- 2 (13%) Not bad
- 9 (56%) Good
Do all your surgeons know that you should undertake CT syllabus?

- Yes: 2 (12%)
- No: 14 (88%)
What is the format of your hospital training?

- Theatre based: 5 (31%)
- Theatre, ward and ICU included: 11 (69%)
Do you get time to go to the ward and ICU for training?

- 5 (31%) Always
- 3 (19%) Rarely
- 8 (50%) Never
How much support do you receive from surgeons?

- Partial: 10 (62%)
- None: 6 (38%)
8 Candidates.
Standard setting – 6 SCPs vs 6 cardiac surgeons.
Modified Angoff method.
  • Passmark – 91.95.
  • SCP – 91.83.
  • Surgeon – 92.1.
Six trainees passed and two failed.
Summary & New exam

- Our study highlighted:
  - Importance of final exit exam in addition to the academic qualification in CT surgery.
- CT SCPs are not just suturing, assisting or holding camera like other specialities.
  - Important to be proficient in clinical as well as academic work.
- Effort of SCTS and RCS Edinburgh with ACSA.
- Awareness of this examination throughout the Cardiothoracic speciality.
- Development of surgical team will provide excellent surgical care.
Any Questions