

BACKGROUND

- Retaining early-career family physicians (ECFPs) in comprehensive primary care is challenging
- Currently 2.5 million Ontarians lack a family practitioner, a figure expected to rise to 4 million by 2026 (Ontario College of Family Physicians, 2024)
- Rapid intervention is required to address the family physician shortage crisis
- Mentorship is one proposed strategy to help ECFPs successfully transition into independent practice
- Hernandez-Lee et. al, 2018: In a "First Five Years in Family Practice" survey conducted in 2016, 56% of new graduates did not have a mentor, and 77% would have participated in a mentorship program, if available

PURPOSE: What are the needs and impact of mentorship for early-career family physicians?

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the personal, professional and healthcare system challenges faced by ECFPs
- Identify ECFPs' mentorship needs
- Describe ECFPs' preferred qualities in a mentor
- Describe the practice needs and demographics of ECFPs

METHODS

- Literature reviewed to summarize the impact and needs of mentorship for ECFPs
- Search: Ovid MEDLINE – (mentors or mentorship or mentoring) and (primary care physician or family physician), filtered by English language and 2018 – 2024: 53 articles were identified

29 articles included:

- Inclusion criteria: discussion relevant to mentorship or coaching and needs or challenges of family physicians

24 articles excluded:

- Exclusion criteria: not in English, published before the year 2018, not directly relevant to mentorship or challenges in family medicine
- Articles were organized into an annotated bibliography

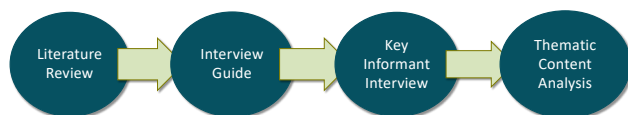


Figure 1: Methodology of qualitative data collection and analysis

- Qualitative study using one-on-one key informant interviews held over Zoom (30 mins.)
- Development of an interview guide and demographic questionnaire of questions to prompt discussion with each participant
- Participants: early-career family physicians from DCFM at UofT
- Data analysis: de-identified transcripts subjected to thematic content analysis

RESULTS

- Prominent themes and codes from the key informant interview outlined in Figure 2

Figure 2: Thematic content analysis of key informant pilot interview (n=1)

Theme 1: Facilitators of Comprehensive Care	Theme 2: Challenges faced by ECFPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shorter duration of training Ability to gain more skills in focused practise and maintain skills from residency Mentor's influence/ role model Financial reasoning 	<p>Professional challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative burden (Electronic Medical Record/EMR messages, following lab results, billing) Lack of knowledge of practise management <p>Personal challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-life balance Time management Lack of compensation
Theme 3: Preferred mentor qualities	Theme 4: Desired structure of mentorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledgeable in specified areas No preference for socio-demographics Shared values Few years more of practice experience Similar practise style and life stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration related mentorship preferred earlier in career (practise and time management) Leadership and career advancement related mentorship preferred later (2-3 years from graduation)
Theme 5: Perceived impact of mentorship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages ECFPs to persevere through challenges Create positive health systems changes Draw in more comprehensive family physicians Increase job satisfaction 	

DISCUSSION

- The literature shows that the benefits of mentorship are multifactorial and evidently that there is a need for mentoring in ECFPs

- The choice of comprehensive practice is multifaceted, which includes the influence of mentorship
- ECFPs face professional and personal challenges in their transition to independent practice, with an emphasis on administrative burden
- Mentors are preferred to exhibit similarities in lifestyle and values, and to have recent experience in selected areas
- ECFPs opt for administrative mentorship at the earliest possibility
- A positive impact on retention rates and job satisfaction is perceived on account of mentorship

Figure 3: Three kinds of mentorship needs interpreted from the pilot key informant interview



NEXT STEPS

- This pilot interview will be used to conduct further key informant interviews; 4 more prospective participants have been contacted to continue the study

Next steps:

- Triangulate results with an ongoing quality improvement needs assessment survey conducted by UofT's DFCM
- Scale up to focus groups using preliminary findings from pilot
- Integrate results to inform the development of policy, advocacy (CFPC, OCFP) and medical education initiatives

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