

Are we now in a position to offer workplace-based training in nutrition to our Gastroenterology Trainees across UK?

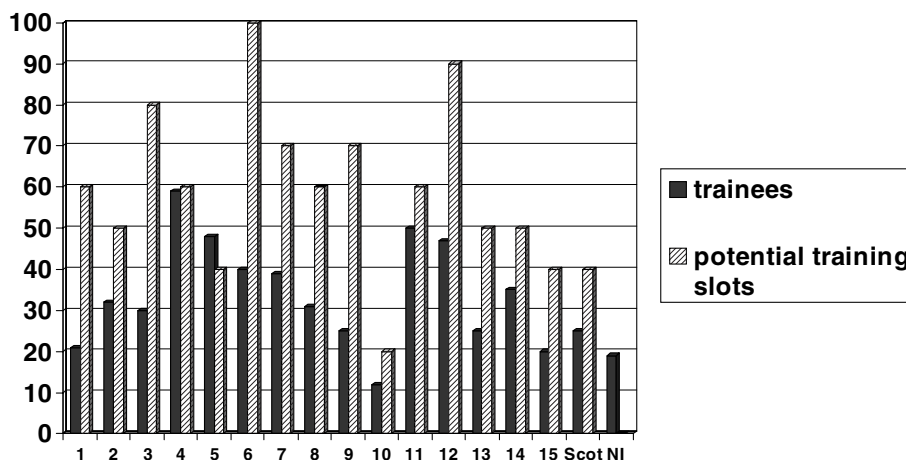
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Training in nutrition for Gastroenterology specialist registrars (SPRs) has long been acknowledged to be highly variable in quality. In 2002, BAPEN estimated that less than half of hospitals had nutrition support teams (NSTs) and only 35 hospitals (20%) were considered able to provide specific training in nutrition for gastro SPRs⁽¹⁾. Indeed, a survey undertaken by Trainees in Gastroenterology (TiG) in 2008 concluded that ‘nutrition is the area in which the majority of trainees do not think they will attain competence’. However, in recent years, as the profile of nutrition generally has strengthened, increasing numbers of advertisements for Consultant Gastroenterologists have stipulated an interest in nutrition.

The aim of this survey was to assess the current situation with respect to potential nutrition training in UK, and estimate the feasibility of developing workplace based modules for Gastroenterology registrars in the near future.

An email questionnaire was sent to gastroenterologists from 179 acute Trusts in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, asking about nutrition support services and interest in providing ‘on the job’ nutrition training. An estimate of potential training slots per region was made, based on the number of responding Trusts with a minimum of two trainees, and existing NST/expression of interest in providing nutrition training. An assumption was made that each Trust could provide ten 6-month slots over a 5-year training period. The overall response rate was 135/179 (75%), with a range of 40–82% across all regions. One hundred and twenty three out of 135 (91%) respondents registered at least one doctor with an interest in nutrition; 98/135 (73%) of respondents had an NST. These included a doctor in 93%, a dietitian in 95%, a nurse in 95%, and a pharmacist in 81%. One hundred and one out of 135 (75%) of respondent Trusts had a nutrition steering committee. Seventy four percent of respondents would, in principle, be interested in offering nutrition training in the future and a further 8% indicated interest contingent on change in staffing levels, etc. The graph below shows the data for each region in UK and suggests that, for the majority of regions, the number of potential training slots exceeds the number of trainees.



The data from this survey suggest that Trust nutrition support services are increasing throughout UK and that it may now be possible to offer formal workplace based training for our Gastroenterology trainees.

1. Forbes (2002) A BAPEN questionnaire on Nutrition in Training of SPRs in Gastroenterology.