



Psychotherapy Training of Psychiatrists

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Canadian psychiatry has and continues to affirm the role of psychotherapy as an integral component of psychiatric care. As physicians with training both in medical and in psychological aspects of behaviour, psychiatrists are able to integrate psychological and biological approaches within a treatment plan.

This unique skill set defines psychotherapy as a medical act when practiced by psychiatrists. Being able to identify the medical and biological conditions that may impact patients, psychiatrists can effectively use tools of diagnosis, and psychological and biological theory to fashion effective interventions.¹

Psychiatrists who provide psychotherapy provide a treatment interaction whereby change is effected in the thought processes, moods, or behaviours of the patient. As such, the training of psychiatrists and psychiatric residents is critical to the production of skilled and well-trained medical practitioners. Whereas other professionals may be involved in the training of psychiatrists and residents, given the medical underpinning of this unique skill set, the training and all of the certification of this training should be done, as much as possible, by psychiatrists.

We are a self-regulating profession and, as such, provide the education and certification of its trainees.² It is our role and responsibility to ensure that admittance into the profession is guarded by strict standards of qualification and, once admitted, members are governed by high standards of competence and conduct. As a self-regulating profession, it is essential that psychiatrists retain the leadership role in the planning, teaching, and certification of psychotherapy training of psychiatrists.

Psychotherapy training, with the unique advantages brought to bear by medical practitioners, is a significant component of psychiatric training. Psychotherapy training of psychiatrists and residents should be provided by and regulated by the psychiatric profession.

References

1. Chaimowitz G. Psychotherapy in psychiatry. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2004;49(2 Insert):1–4. CPA Position Statement appears in English and French.
2. Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers Association. What does it mean to be a self-governing -regulating profession? Regina (SK): Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers Association; 2006 Oct. Discussion Paper.

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