



Letter to the Editor

Mentoring: A revolutionary act



Dear Sir,

Essentially, being a mentor is a revolutionary act based on the intention and the capability to promote constant changes and evolution in the mentee. But specially, it constitutes the ability to encourage individuals to promote change and generate wellbeing in all terms [1].

A mentor is not just a professor, but a professional with the enough expertise to actively participate during the learning process of the mentees, guiding, helping, expanding their curiosity, proposing changes that make the mentee better, and providing tools that will serve to the mentees in their practice and personal lives. It means that a mentor positively influences the function of the mentees' careers and psychosocial aspects. Table 1 shows the characteristics of what a good mentor is.

Mentorship has an important role in developing clinicians in some specific areas. In this way, authors have considered establishing mentorship programs within departments such as surgery, plastic surgery or psychiatry as they consider it is one of the most significant factors for career satisfaction and success [2]. There are also studies evaluating the effect of mentorship on quality implementation programs in diagnostic laboratories, in which these programs enhanced accountability for implementing planned actions and increased awareness of the importance of quality management processes in a laboratory [3]. Furthermore, recent investigations are supporting mentoring programs as an increasingly popular strategy for early intervention with at-risk youth, promoting positive youth development and improving psychosocial problems such as depression, substance use, interpersonal relationships and academic engagement. In addition, the possibility and significance of a one-on-one mentoring program and a systematic career coaching program in medical education has been confirmed [4].

To the mentee, it represents an additional and constructive insight into his/her work and career, obtaining practical tips on planning a successful job or study strategy, developing understanding, skills and problem-solving. Mentees also receive advice and guidance with their career thinking and their transition from undergraduate to a young professional. This process encourages them to reflect and recognize or celebrate effective practice, identify areas for development and improve self-confidence.

On the other hand, mentors can develop and practice coaching

Table 1

Characteristics of a good mentor.

- Guide and steer the mentee toward paths of success, motivate mentees to set achievable goals
- Offer advice and counsel to help in the decision making process, but not to supervise and make decisions for mentee
- Differentiate between developing a mentee and using a mentee (avoid overdependence and exploitation)
- Encourage personal reflection and give constructive feedback and advice
- Demonstrate effective questioning and active listening
- Demonstrating empathy and alternative perspectives
- Support, challenge, advise, empower and inform
- Maintain a professional relationship
- Helping to navigate obstacles and derailing behaviors that could affect professional success
- Establish an open communication system with reciprocal feedback
- Establish truth and allow mistakes

skills, share the knowledge and experience gained, and they have the opportunity to help others, improve job satisfaction, motivation and enhance peer recognition. Finally, mentorship encourages mentors to self-reflect and develop specific or new skills [4].

As shown, not all the benefits are obtained by the mentee. This relationship implies a mutual benefit and has shown to help with work-life balance and reduce rates of clinician stress and burnout. Even, mentorship can be considered as a way to avoid burnout in the sense that it is perceived as an activity in which clinicians spend part of their professional effort on what they value most in medical practice [5].

As a conclusion, mentorship is important in all knowledge areas and has been demonstrated in medical sciences with established programs. Therefore, we encourage professors and students to consider this mentorship programs to improve academic and personal relationships and to develop new and important skills for life.

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Juan Camilo Gómez-Ospina
UROGIV Research Group, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia

Herney Andrés García-Perdomo*
UROGIV Research Group, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia
School of Medicine, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia
E-mail address: herney.garcia@correounivalle.edu.co.

* Corresponding author. UROGIV Research Group, Universidad del Valle, Cali, Colombia.