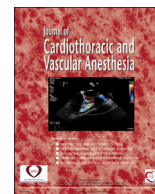


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Special Article

Mentoring Aspiring Program Directors in Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology—Perspectives From Program Directors Around the United States

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SINCE THE ACHIEVEMENT of Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) recognition for adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology (ACTA) fellowships, the number of newly initiated and expanding programs has increased at a steady pace (Figs 1 and 2). Presently there are 66 accredited programs with 193 positions. Competition is at an all-time high, with ACTA fellowships surpassing many anesthesiology

subspecialty fellowships in popularity.¹ As a result of this rapid growth, there is an important requirement for program leadership that is both excellent and enduring. The hidden complexities in the role of program director often are underestimated.² As a consequence, experienced faculty members often have an incomplete understanding and appreciation of what this demanding educational leadership position entails. For aspiring program directors of ACTA fellowships, the path to successful leadership does not need to be one of angst and uncertainty. With proper mentoring and exposure to the many resources that are readily available, this journey can prove both exciting and rewarding.

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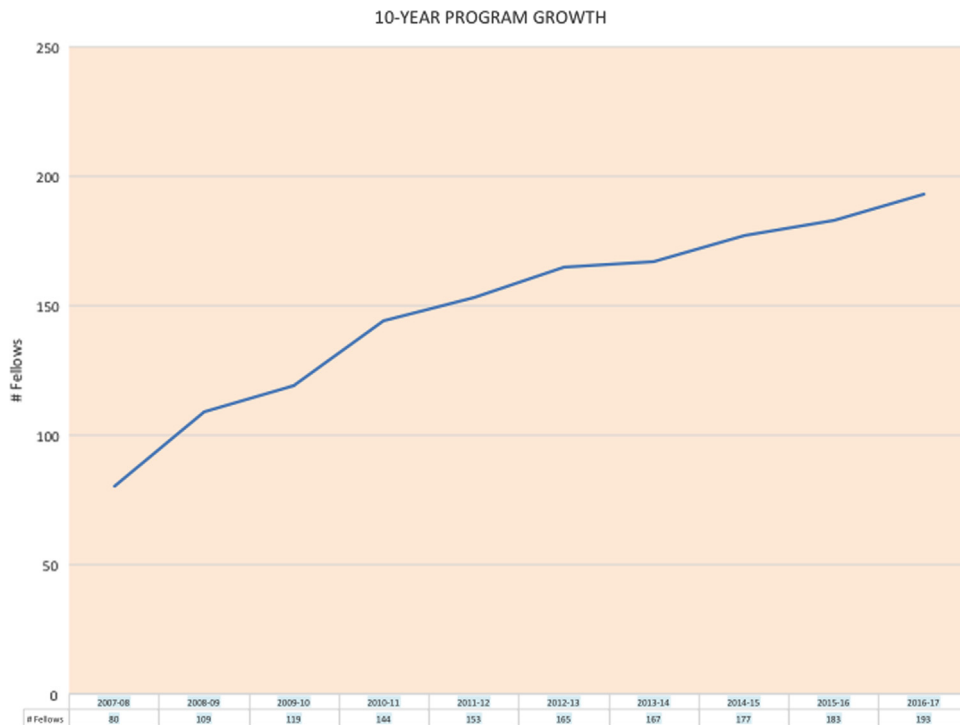


Fig 1. The growth of adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology programs across the United States since accreditation. Adapted from Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (www.acgme.org).

Challenges of Program Accreditation

Before the recognition of ACTA as an ACGME-accredited fellowship, there were no specific requirements, and programs

were administered at the discretion of their directors and faculty.² Formal accreditation by the ACGME provided the long-awaited recognition as a discrete and important subspecialty of anesthesiology and outlined a roadmap with

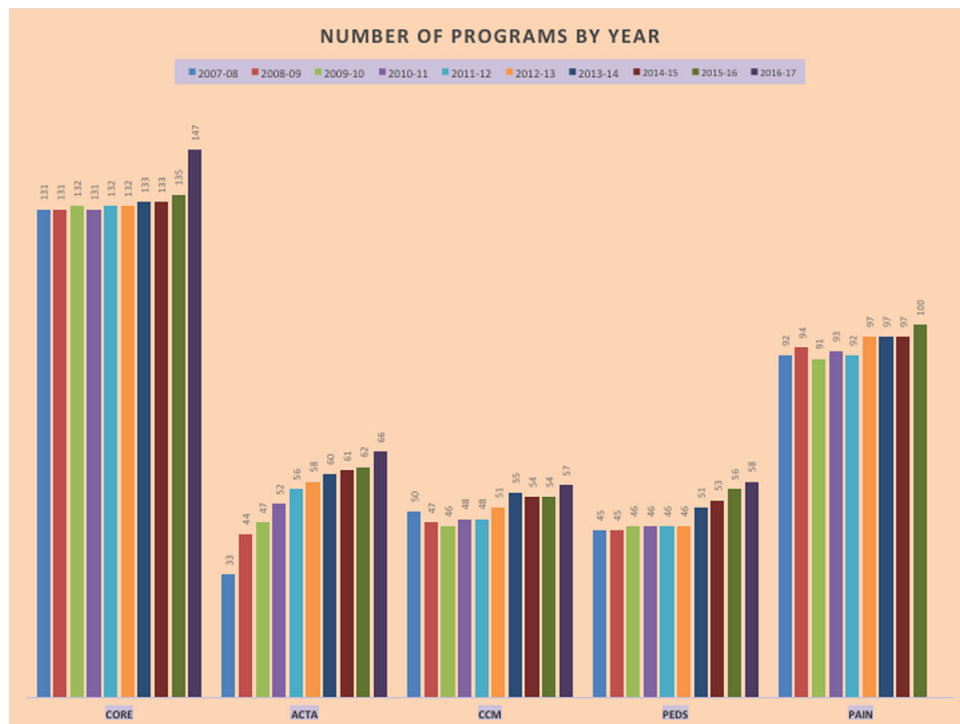


Fig 2. Growth of anesthesiology programs across the United States. ACTA, adult cardiothoracic anesthesiology fellowship; CCM, critical care medicine fellowship; CORE, core anesthesiology residency; PAIN, pain medicine fellowship; PEDS, pediatric anesthesiology fellowship. Adapted from Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (www.acgme.org).

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