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Evaluation of the orthopaedics and traumatology resident education in Turkey: A descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study is to describe the current situation regarding the training, working conditions, future plans, fields of interest and satisfaction of orthopaedics and traumatology residents in Turkey.

Methods: A descriptive survey questionnaire consisting of 24 questions was designed to identify the problems and solution suggestions concerning training of orthopaedic residents. All orthopaedics and traumatology residents who took the 2013 Progress Testing for Speciality in Medicine (UEGS) held by Turkish Orthopaedics and Traumatology Education Council (TOTEK) were surveyed in the class at the end thereof as well as the young orthopaedic surgeons who were reached through the email groups of Turkish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology – Residents and Young Attendings Council (TOTBID-AGUH).

Results: A total of 725 residents and 132 young attendings were surveyed. The most outstanding answers are as follows: 62,7% of the respondents replied to the question "Is there a training program/Is it being applied" as "yes/yes". It was found out that 94,3% of the respondents wanted to be involved in a rotation abroad. The "patient care" was the most common answer, with a ratio of 36,9%, to the question "What's the priority of the department you are studying in?". Regarding work conditions, "many emergency on-calls" was found to be the most important parameter affecting life conditions ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Aiming to identify the challenges that orthopaedics and traumatology residents in Turkey face as regards their training, this survey stands as a pioneering study with a high participation rate. Analysis of survey data highlights the importance of several key factors such as the development of training programs and increasing the time spent with academicians as well as spreading and promotion of log book application.

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Introduction

The medical specialist training can be defined as a program that introduces the knowledge, expertise and attitude models required for a specialist doctor to perform his/her job. The training program should be presented under the guidance and supervision of

qualified academicians and provide the personal and professional development of residents while helping the patients get a safe and appropriate medical service. In many countries around the world, efforts are underway to make improvements in the fields of undergraduate education, residency and continuing medical education. Accordingly, the World Medical Education Federation has been carrying out several studies with a view to setting minimum standards for the training of specialists.^{1–3} In the United States of America, orthopaedic training programs have been guided by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (ABOS) since 1934.⁴ According to the ABOS, there are 3 basic purposes of orthopaedic

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residents' training programs; i) training on common diseases and situations related to the orthopaedic surgery; ii) training on basic and clinical sciences, iii) training on the orthopaedic surgery techniques and procedures. However, the content on the training is far from standardized and differs substantially among programs.

Turkish Orthopaedics and Traumatology Education Council (TOTEK), which operates under the Turkish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology (TOTBID), carries out studies on core training programmes as well as designing log books and offering a range of activities including institutional visits and interim exam that is the Progress Testing for Speciality in Medicine (UEGS).

With this study, it is aimed to receive the opinion of orthopaedics and traumatology residents and young attendings in Turkey regarding their training, working conditions, future plans, fields of interest and satisfaction through a questionnaire and to describe the current situation under the light of the data obtained.

Materials and methods

A descriptive survey questionnaire was designed to identify the problems and solution suggestions concerning training of orthopaedic residents in Turkey in collaboration with the TOTBID, TOTEK and TOTBID-Residents and Young Attendings Council (TOTBID-AGUH). This survey has been applied to all orthopaedics and traumatology residents who attended the UEGS held by TOTEK in May, 2013 and young attendings with up to 5 years of experience through TOTBID-AGUH mail groups. The young attendings were asked to answer the questions considering the situation of the educational institution they graduated from. The total number of respondents to the questionnaire is 857, including 725 of 811 residents in Turkey who pursue their orthopaedics and traumatology degree and 132 young attending who were reached through the email groups. Consisting of 24 questions, the questionnaire was divided into 5 subgroups based on a subject-wise question distribution to figure out; 1. Demographic properties of respondents; 2. Problems of residents in orthopaedic training; 3. Fields of interest/future plans of orthopaedics residents; 4. Problems concerning work conditions and 5. Satisfaction levels of orthopaedics residents (Table 1). The survey was modelled on the similar national and international studies conducted in orthopaedics and other branches of medicine in previous years.^{5,6}

Of all, 18 were multiple choice questions whereas the remaining 6 were scored on a 5 point Likert probing the perception about the training for specialists. Responses were rated from minimum 1 to maximum of 5 (e.g.: 1 = I strongly disagree, 2 = I disagree, 3 = I don't have an idea/I'm unsure, 4 = I agree, 5 = I strongly agree).

In the analysis of the survey data, the chi square test method was used to assess the satisfaction levels with the medical residency duration, working hours, type of institution and economic conditions. Furthermore, the IBM® SPSS® Statistics 20 (Statistical Package of Social Science) was used for the statistical analysis of the responses to the Likert scale questions designed to measure respondents' attitudes.

Results

The analysis of the survey results revealed that 545 (63,6%) of the respondents were studying in a university while 312 (36,4%) in training and research hospitals. It was found out that orthopaedics and traumatology was ranked among the first three choices of 657 respondents (76,6%) and among the succeeding choices for the rest in the Examination for Speciality in Medicine (Table 2).

Table 1
Survey questions.

Demographic properties	
1.	Where do you work?
2.	What rank is it in your programme choices?
Training	
3.	Is there any training program?/Is it being applied?
4.	Is there a log book application available/Is it being applied?
5.	Which courses have you attended?
6.	Does the testing for speciality measure your knowledge?
7.	Would you like a rotation abroad?
8.	Would you like a rotation in the country?
9.	Which year did you get your thesis on?
10.	Which activity contributes mostly in the training?
11.	Comparison of the contribution of non-surgery activities in the training
12.	Frequency of one-to-one study with academicians
13.	Comparison of frequency of activities conducted together with the academicians
14.	Comparison of the impact of activities conducted together with the academicians on residents' training
15.	What is the priority of the department you are studying in?
Interests/future plan	
16.	Interests
17.	Plan after proficiency
Working conditions	
18.	Factors affecting life conditions
19.	How many hours a day do you work?
20.	Factors affecting work conditions (academic)
21.	Factors affecting work conditions (social)
Satisfaction	
22.	Are you happy with your life?
23.	What is the role of your work in your dissatisfaction?
24.	Are you happy to be working in your department?

Training

The first question under the training subcategory "Is there a training program/Is it being applied?" was replied as "yes/yes" by 62,7%, "yes/no" by 17,7% and "no" by 18,1%. The majority, with a 46,9% ratio replied to the question "Is there a log book available/is it being applied" as "yes/no".

Respondents were asked to check the courses they attended from a given list including Basic Sciences Research School (BSRS), Basic Trauma Course (BTC), AO Course (AOC), Basic Arthroscopy Course (BAC), Basic Arthroplasty Course (BAPC), Ilizarov Course (ilizarovC), Advanced Trauma Course (ATC), Advanced Arthroscopy Course (AAC), Advanced Arthroplasty Course (AAPC), Basic Spine Course (BSC). The BSRS had the highest response rate with over 40% and followed by BTC, AOC, BAC, BAPB, ilizarovC, ATC, AAC, AAPC and BSC respectively.

The majority of the respondents (30,8%) replied the question "Does the board examination measure your knowledge?" as "I'm unsure".

The analysis of responses to the questions on national and international rotations showed that 80,4% of the residents had a positive attitude towards being involved in rotation at home while 94,3% in the rotation abroad:

The surgeries attended were reported as having the highest impact on education with a ratio of 53,7% which was followed by

Table 2
Demographic data.

Questions	Number	Ratio (%)
Work place		
• University	545	36,4
• TRH	312	63,6
Ranking in the programme choices		
• First three choices	657	76,6
• Other	200	23,4

TRH: Training and Research Hospital.

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