

Pediatric Residency Training in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

In our country, the Ministry of Health is involved in the regulation and licensure of postgraduate medical education. The Turkish Medical Association plays a role in specialist training through the Coordination Board of Specialist Associations. There are two big associations that are members of the Turkish Medical Association (The Turkish Pediatric Association, The Turkish National Pediatric Association). Modern medical education in the Ottoman Empire started on 14 March 1827. The first Turkish book on newborn care and diseases was written in 1844. Lectures by a pediatrician, at the Military Medical School began in the 1900s. With the law, which was enacted on 8 November 1928 in the Republican period, a requirement of licensure in pediatrics was determined as a two-year working period. With the 1933 university reform, the İstanbul University Medical Faculty Department of Pediatrics was established. Today, Pediatrics residency training continues to be given in 62 Medical Faculties and 29 Training and Research Hospitals, according to the quota data for the 2023 Medical Specialization Examination. In 1995, the Turkish Pediatric Association and the Turkish National Pediatric Association came together and decided to work on improving Pediatric Education in Turkey. On September 14, 2003, the General Assembly of the Turkish Pediatrics Board convened for the first time. In 2019, the board of pediatrics accelerated its work with a new perspective. In 2020, the Pediatric board started accreditation of educational programs and in 2021, two levels (Knowledge and skill exams) the National board exam.

Keywords: Education, Accreditation, Evaluation, Postgraduate, Pediatrics

INTRODUCTION

Today, in our country, the Ministry of Health is involved in the regulation and licensure of postgraduate medical education. The mission, authorization, and outcomes are defined by the Health Ministry, whereas training is delivered by a hospital system (Universities (Both Public and Foundation) and Health Ministry Education and Research Hospitals.

Medical societies also take place in training activities. There are two big associations that are members of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA). The Turkish Pediatric Association (TPA) (1930) is the oldest one and the Turkish National Pediatric Association (TNPA) (1958). Both associations contribute to pediatrics education in Turkey through symposiums, workshops, courses, congresses, periodicals, books, and building the Turkish Board of Pediatrics (TBP). The TMA plays a role in specialist training through the Specialist Associations Coordination Board (CBSA).

We can explore the history of pediatric education in our country in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic period.

Ottoman Empire

Modern medical education in the Ottoman Empire started on 14 March 1827 (2). During this period, Pediatrics education started with lectures on neonatal care and infectious diseases by obstetricians. The first Turkish book on newborn care and diseases was written in 1844 by Hayullah Efendi, one of the lecturers working at Galatasaray Medical School founded in 1839 (Galatasaray Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Şahanesi) (1). According to published data, Nafiz Bey, An internal medicine specialist started to teach pediatrics lessons to the last-year students in 1867 at the Military Medical School (Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Adeliye-i Şahane) (1). During this time, Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Mülkiye-i Şahane, which was a civilian medical school, was established and Besim Ömer Bey, started to give lectures to the students of both medical schools on infant diseases, diarrhea and nutrition (1887) (1).

Lectures by a pediatrician, who specialized in pediatrics in Paris, at the Military Medical School began in the 1900s. In the 1900 curriculum of the Gülhane School, it is seen that Salih Bey gave classes on Seririyat-ı Etfal and Telkih-i Cüderi (Child Diseases

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and Vaccination against Smallpox) for 1 hour a week to the 5th and 6th grades (2). In 1908, the two medical faculties were merged. In the 1909 curriculum, it is seen that Besim Ömer Bey gave classes on pediatrics (2).

The first Children's Hospital, Hamidiye Etfal Children's Hospital was opened in 1899, Besim Ömer Bey took care of pediatric patients (3).

Kadri Raşid Bey attended Pediatrics Clinics in Paris for about a year, he started to do Pediatrics at a Polyclinic in Darulaceze. This was the first step in applied Pediatric Education (1901) (1,2).

Turkish Republic

Universities and Ministry of Health

With the 9th article of the law numbered 369, which was enacted on 8 November 1928 in the Republican period, the requirement of licensure in medical specialization and the working periods were determined. In the meantime, a two-year working requirement has been introduced for child specialization. Working time for pediatrics specialization in the clinics of the University and the Ministry of Health was three years in 1947, 4 years in 1955, 5 years on 19.06.2002, and decreased to 4 years again on 06.04.2011 (2). Advances in medicine between 1955 and 1973 led to a vast expansion of their specialties.

Prof Dr İhsan Hilmi Alantar taught the Püericulture course at Darülfünun in 1924. With the 1933 university reform, Prof Dr İhsan Hilmi Alantar and Prof Dr Sezai Bedrettin Tümay were appointed to the İstanbul University Medical Faculty Department of Pediatrics (2). Following Prof Dr İhsan Hilmi Alantar and Prof Dr Sezai Bedrettin Tümay, studies continued with Prof Dr Metine Bilginer, Prof Dr Cihan Tahsin Gurson, and Prof Dr Omer Bedir at İstanbul University Medical Faculty Department of Pediatrics (1,4). Today, pediatrics in Turkey has reached an internationally accepted level by our lecturers, who are on the path of our distinguished professors, who are the pioneers of pediatrics. Afterward, the law numbered 4761 on the establishment of Ankara Faculty of Medicine was established, and on July 7, 1945, Professor Albert Eckstein was appointed head of the Department of Pediatrics (5).

In the following years, Hacettepe and Ege Universities Medical Faculties were established in 1957, and then the Faculties of Medicine continued to be opened in many provinces of Anatolia. According to the 2023 Medical Specialization Examination quota table data, 62 Medical Faculties and 29 Training and Research Hospitals continue to accept residents to provide pediatric education this year (6).

In 2007, with Law No. 5614, Article 9 of Law No. 1219 dated 11/4/1928 on the Execution of Medicine and Medical Arts was amended and the Medical Specialization Board (MSB) was established as a permanent board of the Ministry of Health (7). It is tasked with deciding on the proposals for granting and abolishing education authorization for educational institutions,

determining the rotations of specialization departments and the specialty examination juries. Also, it is tasked with determining the faculties and educational institutions that will carry out the scientific evaluation of the assistants coming from foreign countries, giving opinions on residency training in medicine and specialist manpower and conducting studies and research to monitor the continuous professional development of specialists (7).

Within the framework of the MSB Curriculum Formation and Standard Setting system, the Pediatrics residency training core curriculum (04/06/2013), in which national standards were determined, was developed. Institutions providing education were asked to review and improve their training programs according to this curriculum (8).

Turkish Medical Association and Union of European Medical Societies

Immediately after the foundation of the European Union, standardization studies on medical education and practices in Europe began in 1958, and the Union of European Medical

Societies (UEMS) were established to organize specialty training and practice in medicine. The TMA was accepted as an associate member of the UEMS by the general assembly in 1993 (9).

The TMA gathered specialist associations, each of which strives in their own discipline, in order to advance the specialist training and practice in Turkey at contemporary standards, right after membership. National associations of specialists came together under the umbrella of TMA with a structure similar to the UEMS organization and formed the Coordinating Board of Specialist Association (CBSA). Through Medical Specialization Education Congresses (the first congress was in 1994) and meetings, important steps have been achieved in developing and realizing the accreditation processes of the Education Programs and conducting the National Board Exams (9).

Turkish Pediatric Association and Turkish National Pediatric Association Studies on the Board of Pediatrics

In 1995, the TPA and the TNPA came together and decided to improve Pediatric Education in Turkey. They built a committee under the chairmanship of Prof Dr Şükrü Cin. The main purpose of this committee was to improve Pediatric education in Turkey. First of all, a survey study was conducted to determine the status of pediatric education and the aspects that need to be improved in university hospitals, Ministry of Health and Social Insurance Institution Training and Research Hospitals. The results of the study were discussed at the 1995 TMPD congress and then at the TPA congress. Thus, the studies of the creation of the TBP began (10).

In 2002, a small study group consisting of Prof Dr Şükrü Cin, Prof Dr Gülsev Kale, and Prof Dr Murat Yurdakök started to work on a Board Instruction and completed its work in the same year. Following the approval of the Instruction by both associations, on September 14, 2003, the General Assembly of the TBP convened for the first time. Afterward, the groups

formed with the meetings and workshops continuing to work on the core training program, the structure of the training, the national board exam and accreditation, and the creation of a logbook for pediatric residents.

In 2019, headed by Prof Dr Müjgan Alikasıfoğlu, the TBP accelerated its work with a new perspective, with the invaluable contributions of Prof. Dr. Orhan Odabaşı from TMA, and Prof Dr Mehmet Vural, Chair of TPA and Prof Dr Koray Boduroğlu Chair of TNPA.

The main goal of the TBP was to set national standards to guide the review and improvement of educational programs of institutions providing residency training in pediatrics, and to support residents and pediatricians in gaining individual competence.

First, we started by recognizing that National Standards should be clearly defined, meaningful, appropriate, relevant, measurable, accessible and acceptable to institutions, residents and pediatricians. We also agreed that National Standards in pediatric residency training should be determined, modified, or supplemented based on regional or institutional needs and priorities.

In line with the acceptance of the general principles, we started to review the WFME postgraduate medical education global standards for quality improvement, the TMA National Specialization Training Standards, and the Ministry of Health MSB's Curriculum (8,11,12).

It was decided that our work should cover broad categories of process, structure, content, outcomes/competencies, assessment, and learning environment as recommended by the aforementioned authorities.

The TBP executive committee decided to continue its work in different areas of institutional accreditation, individual competency evaluation, developing and upgrading the pediatric residency education program and life-long learning (continuous medical education) in pediatrics, and Four different commissions were built up.

- 1- Commission for the Evaluation of the Educational Program (Accreditation)
- 2- Commission for Developing and Upgrading the Education Program
- 3- Commission for Individual Assessment and Evaluation
- 4- Commission for Continuous Medical Education and Development

Evaluation of the Educational Program (Accreditation) process:

Based on the Postgraduate Medical Educational standards published in 2015 by the WFME and the TMA National Standards for Specialization Education in Medicine, it was accepted that accreditation of the institution should cover self-

evaluation, peer review, and visit to the institution process in 9 areas with a total of 38 sub-areas (11,12).

- 1- Mission and outcomes
- 2- Educational program
- 3-Assessment of trainees
- 4-Trainees
- 5-Trainers
- 6-Educational resources
- 7-Program evaluation
- 8-Governance and administration
- 9-Continuous renewal

The self-evaluation process offered by WFME and TMA CBSA is intended to provide a new framework in which institutions responsible for postgraduate medical education can measure themselves in voluntary self-assessment and development processes. The standards can thus be considered a self-study manual.

The TPB accreditation commission started working in small groups to prepare a self-evaluation form and determine the basic standards required for accreditation of each sub-area.

This means that the standard must be met and fulfillment demonstrated during evaluation of the education program.

Simultaneously, the Educational Program Development and the Upgrading Commission began to review the Ministry of Health MSB's Curriculum by comparing it with the European Core Competency and the American Board of Pediatrics training program.

of European Core competency, American Board of Pediatrics education program. They started by discussing the competencies required by Pediatricians in Turkey, taking into account local and national needs.

They review the program prepared by the Ministry of Health MSB's Curriculum In terms of the content, structure, composition and duration of the training program, the organization and evaluation methods, the relationship between the evaluation and learning of the trainees, the counseling and support of the trainees, the representation of the trainees, the working conditions, the number and qualifications of the trainers, the obligation and development of the trainers, the physical opportunities and information technologies, medical research opportunities, program monitoring, and evaluation mechanism, trainer and trainee feedback methods.

After the work of these two commissions was completed, the sample training program and self-assessment form were published on the website of our committee (13).

Institutional accreditation applications were accepted in 2020 and the first institutions that were entitled to be accredited were announced in June 2021. Accreditation studies continued in 2022 and 2023, and 14 institutions have been accredited so far.

Since the Training and Accreditation process is a dynamic process, the Training Program and Self-Assessment form are renewed every year after the institution visits, taking into account the feedback from the institutions and referees.

National Board Exam

The Assessment and Evaluation Commission started to organize assessment and evaluation exams based on the program developed by the Educational Programs Commission. It was decided to hold both knowledge and some skill exams. The knowledge exam was planned as a written, multiple-choice question exam. Support was received from the Ege University Medical Faculty Medical Education Department for the knowledge exam. A question pool was prepared for the knowledge exam. Questions from trainers working at Universities and Training and Research Hospitals who were members of the TBP were requested for the question pool. A working group was formed for the knowledge exam from TBP members, most of whom were members of the assessment and evaluation commission.

The skill test, on the other hand, was planned to consist of at least 12 stations with the Oski exam. Support was received from the Gazi University Medical Faculty Medical Education Department for the skill exam. For the skill exam, another working group was formed from TBP members, most of whom were members of the assessment and evaluation commission.

To date, three knowledge and two skill exams have been organized and a total of 32 pediatricians were board certified.

CONCLUSION

Pediatrics is the only specialization area with the highest number of subspecialty areas in our country. Institutional accreditation studies carried out to date have shown us that priority is shifted to subspecialties in educational institutions, and the number of faculty members of general pediatrics is very low or absent. Education in general pediatrics is generally limited to rotations in sick child outpatient clinics under the supervision of other subspecialty faculty members. This situation may cause confusion in the definition of the areas of influence and responsibility of general pediatricians and planning the number of general pediatricians. At the same time, due to unnecessary referrals to subspecialists, their workload may increase. In addition, fragmentation of education and service may prevent the holistic approach to the patient, which is accepted as the main principle in medicine. The national board exam results also showed that the main subjects of general pediatrics such as growth and development, behavioral problems and adolescents medicine were the most failed subjects. Authorities that play an important role in planning of education should take into account these situations.

In the future, The work of the TBP, which gained momentum in 2019, should continue at the same pace by expanding its priorities and should also include taking an active role in defining the scope of general pediatrics education and responsibilities of both general pediatricians and subspecialists.

The TBP should introduce the standard for quality development for each sub-area, that is used in accreditation process, to evaluate the best practice for pediatric residency training in Turkey.

The Executive committee should continue to work on the equivalence of the National Board exam with the European Board exam.

To work on areas, continuous medical education and continuous professional development should be taken into account as a priority. Guidelines and books should be prepared for residents and specialists, courses and The TBP should be organized in schools of pediatrics specifically for the skills considered essential.

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