On Global Certification of Training

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The International Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons have initiated the process of certifying, specialist Maxillofacial Surgeons from around the world. For this purpose an international body, called the International Board for Certification of Specialists in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (IBCSOMS) has been floated. Dr Mark Wong, past president of the American Board of Maxillofacial Surgery with a carefully selected group of representatives from around the globe, put together the infrastructure for this ambitious project.

Oral and Maxillofacial surgery around the world has different pathways of training. It differs in both curriculum and training. The necessity to have core competency in

training was the next challenge. The team over a period of several months deliberated and arrived at what was seen as the common minimum requirements to be a qualified practising Maxillofacial Surgeon.

Being part of this exciting project for the last 2 years we were required to create a question bank of the different subspecialties in Maxillofacial surgery. This indeed required over 3 months of research and reading. This was followed with an even tougher assignment of preparing Case series to be used for the Oral examination.

The first ever exams of the IBCSOMS was held at Osaka Japan from the 27–30 March 2015. As one of the first batch of examiners asked to visit Osaka, Japan to examine over 40 candidates was a challenge we took up. There were 12 examiners from all round the world and the Board of Directors. As examiners we had an orientation both for validating the exams and familiarizing with the examination pattern.

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The Examination process was rigorous and in camera. Every candidate was subjected to 3 h of multiple choice questions and 90 min of Oral examination by a total of six examiners in two batches, of 3 each, presenting twelve different Case scenarios, at the end of which the scores were electronically uploaded for the test site to evaluate.

The challenges faced were difficulties in communication since it was being conducted in English, though the candidates rose to the challenge and difficulty in familiarizing with the Tablet used for electronic scoring. Apart from this the exam was conducted in a seamlessly trouble free manner and both the examiners and the examinees thoroughly enjoyed it.

The value of such an internationally conducted exam allows surgeons to be evaluated on a level playing field and

provides a system for selecting people seeking advanced training in surgical departments around the world. The exam also gives exposure to the candidate on aspects of Maxillofacial surgery they are unfamiliar with.

The first week of April in Osaka is the beginning of spring and we were feasted to the world famous Cherry Blossom. A fitting end to a gruelling ordeal of 6 days. There are good reasons why an upcoming Maxillofacial surgeon would want to be part of this international board of Maxillofacial surgery. These certifying exams will be held in different regions of the world periodically and it is proposed to be held at Bangalore, India some time in October 2016. I am sure our members will take advantage of this opportunity.

Yours Truly
Sanjiv Nair