

A NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ADVANCED MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

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Purpose: The ideal model for continuing professional development (CPD) in advanced minimally invasive surgery (MIS) has yet to be defined. In this study we analyzed surgeon attitudes towards CPD in MIS in order to develop an appropriate model for the transfer of advanced MIS to surgeons in practice.

Methods: We surveyed general surgeons practicing in Alberta. Data was collected and analyzed appropriately.

Results: Seventy-one of 92 surveys were returned for a response rate of 77%. The mean age of respondents is 47.7 years and 84% are male. Sixty six percent of respondent describe their surgical practice as community based with a mean of 15 years surgical experience overall. The majority (62%) of respondents believe they developed their MIS surgical skills while in practice. The most prevalent form of CPD in MIS is short courses, with 82% of surgeons having attended at least one short course. When directly comparing short courses and a mentorship program, 69% of respondents believe courses would be less helpful while 21% thought they may be equivalent to mentorship. A majority of respondents (62%) believe that advanced MIS should not be learned in the absence of a mentor. Sixty-one percent of respondents are interested in a comprehensive approach to learning laparoscopic colorectal surgery (including mentoring). Respondents ranked operating room time, instrumentation and training courses as the three top barriers to introducing advanced MIS into practice. One half of all respondents would allocate one week or less away from practice to learn a new MIS procedure.

Conclusions: General surgeons in Alberta want access to different modalities of training; however a mentorship program rates as the most desirable teaching intervention. Logistical issues (time away from practice, availability of mentors) will likely emerge as one of the most important challenges in developing a model for learning advanced MIS for surgeons in practice.