

## The Rising Need for Endocrine Surgery Fellowship in Pakistan

Khwaja M Azim, Hira Ashraf

**IMPORTANCE** Globally the incidence of endocrine diseases has increased significantly. In addition, incidence of thyroid cancer is rising more than any other form of cancer. Owing to increase in endocrinopathies the demand of advanced endocrine surgical training has increased. In face of the growing demand of endocrine surgeons worldwide, Pakistan Endocrine & Thyroid Surgeons Association was formed as a representative body of Pakistani surgeons with special interest in endocrine surgery. Pakistan is ranked third in anticipated population growth spurt between 2015-2050. Surgical burden is anticipated to increase with growing population due to increase in incidence of endocrine diseases and thyroid cancer. There is a dire need of advanced training in endocrine surgery in Pakistan.

**KEY WORDS** Endocrine Surgery Fellowship, Endocrine Surgery, Thyroid Surgery, Adrenal Surgery, Endocrine Surgery Training

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### Editorial

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Endocrine surgery is a surgical subspecialty focusing on the study of surgical management of various diseases of thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, adrenal glands and neuroendocrine tumors of gastrointestinal tract and pancreas<sup>1-4</sup>. For a long time, endocrine glands were considered to form an integrated system. Endocrine surgery has been practiced for hundreds of years. However, it was recognized in the beginning of 20th century. By the middle of twentieth century surgeries of all known endocrine glands had been performed more so often of thyroid and parathyroid glands. However, endocrine surgeries were performed more commonly and with greater safety after the advent of cortisone and endocrine surgeries began to be viewed as a whole. As study in endocrinology advanced syndromes of hypersecretion were identified. Surgeons became increasingly involved in curing these metabolic syndromes via surgical interventions. Henceforth, in later half of twentieth century endocrine surgery started emerging as a new discipline in general surgery.

Globally the incidence of endocrine diseases has increased significantly. In addition, incidence of thyroid cancer is rising more than any other form of cancer. Owing to increase in endocrinopathies the demand of advanced endocrine surgical training has increased. Surgical endocrine disorders are managed by general surgeons, upper and lower gastrointestinal surgeons, otolaryngologists, head and neck surgeons, surgical oncologists and urologists. Only a handful of surgeons have dedicated their service in this discipline. Worldwide only 11 countries have professional body of endocrine surgery.

Increase in endocrine surgical burden has led to increase in demand of dedicated training in endocrine surgery. There are only a few endocrine centers worldwide. In face of the growing demand of endocrine surgeons worldwide, Pakistan Endocrine & Thyroid Surgeons Association was formed as a representative body of Pakistani surgeons with special interest in endocrine surgery<sup>3</sup>. Pakistan is ranked third in anticipated population growth spurt between 2015-2050. Surgical burden is anticipated to increase with growing population due to increase in incidence of endocrine diseases and thyroid cancer. There is a dire need of advanced training in endocrine surgery in Pakistan. In Pakistan due to relative scarcity of endocrine surgeons the bulk of endocrine surgeries are performed by surgeons without specific interest or advanced training in the field. Better outcomes can be achieved if surgeons with advanced training in the field manage these patients.

Most surgical endocrine diseases are managed by general surgeons who have developed special interest in the field and have modeled research endeavors accordingly. However, the recent generation requires endocrine surgeons with formal fellowship training in endocrine surgery. Increase in endocrine diseases has not only led to increase in demand of dedicated endocrine surgeons but also an increased interest in advanced endocrine surgical training. A rapid growth of this specialty is required both in quality and in quantity.

Endocrine surgery fellowship program can offer to fill a significant gap in the existing health care system of

Pakistan. Trainees can have a dedicated expertise in this field. During the fellowship trainees will be offered exposure to management of thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, adrenal glands and neuroendocrine tumors of pancreas and gastrointestinal tract. This field inherently requires multidisciplinary exposure to endocrinology,

medical oncology, pathology, radiology and genetics. Dedicated expertise in traditional and modern surgical procedures and familiarity with ongoing research will offer to counter the scarcity by training leaders and policy makers in endocrine surgery.

## ARTICLE INFORMATION

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