Perceptions of mentorship in postgraduate medicine: both sides of the coin

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Conflict of Interest Declaration:

No conflicts of interest to declare
Background:

- Medical residents experience significant stress daily\textsuperscript{1,2}
  - High-risk for burnout\textsuperscript{3}
- Wellness integrated within CanMEDS Professional role\textsuperscript{4}
- Mentorship\textsuperscript{6-9}
  - Guides professional and personal development
  - Variable uptake within PGME
Objective:

- To explore the perceptions of mentorship according to radiation oncology residents and faculty
Methods:

Setting and Participants:
- University of Toronto Department of Radiation Oncology (UTDRO) residents and faculty
- No formalized residency mentorship program exists

Study Design and Data Collection:
- Qualitative exploratory study
- Purposeful sampling
- One-on-one semi-structured interviews
- Audiotaped and transcribed verbatim
- Saturation
Methods:

Data Analysis:
- Inductive thematic analysis: 2 researchers
  - NVivo software version 11
- Key codes derived from interview data
- Interpreted to yield emergent themes
Results:

- 20 interviews from Oct to Dec 2017

Participant Characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number (Response Rate)</th>
<th>Age (mean)</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Seniority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents (n=22)</td>
<td>10 (64%)</td>
<td>25-42 (31)</td>
<td>4 female 6 male</td>
<td>4 junior 6 senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (n=61)</td>
<td>10 (25%)</td>
<td>33-59 (44)</td>
<td>6 female 4 male</td>
<td>5 junior 5 senior</td>
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Results:

Thematic Analysis:

1. Mentorship experiences of residents and faculty,
2. Mentorship needs of residents and faculty,
3. Creating mentorship relationships,
4. Peer mentorship
Theme 1: Mentorship experiences

- Residents did not typically perceive their interactions with faculty as mentorship
- Faculty perceived they are informal mentors to residents

*R006: During residency, I've had people that I've worked closely with for research. They have been good relationships and helpful for me. But, I haven't really seen it as a mentorship relationship.*
Theme 2: Mentorship needs

- Professional guidance > personal
- Evolution as residents progress through training
  - Junior vs. senior resident needs
- Residents should have access to several diverse mentors

F001: There are things that will peak their head up at certain times. In PGY1/2 they need more advice on finding good research projects. In PGY5, the primary focus is passing the exams, followed closely by fellowships and ultimately a job.
Theme 3: Creating mentorship relationships

- Ideal mentors:
  - Engaged, approachable, available, advocate
- Ideal mentees:
  - Engaged, proactive, active listening
- Mentorship programs: some structure but flexible

F006: “I don't think you can force these relationships. Certainly the best mentor/mentee relationships I've had, have been things that just kind of gelled intrinsically. I think that that engagement has to be valued by both parties.”
Residents describe a culture of friendship and guiding

Faculty mentors needed to prevent propagation of misinformation

Competition in limited job markets

R004: As a junior resident, you're looking towards program specific goals, getting through rotations, finding a research project, passing exams. [For me], almost all of it came from senior residents. I think the best relationships for juniors are with their senior peers.
Limitations:

- Context specificity:
  - single institution, single residency program

- Selection bias:
  - participation voluntary
  - over- or under-representation of certain groups/views

- Potential power imbalances
Conclusions:

- In this qualitative study, the perceptions of mentorship were explored from the perspective of radiation oncology residents and faculty.
  - Highlighted areas of alignment and discordance

Future Work:

- Results will inform the development, implementation and evaluation of a formal mentorship program within our residency program.
  - Needs assessments can inform program specific issues
Acknowledgements:

- Supervisors: Dr. Sylvia Heeneman and Meredith Giuliani
- Collaborator: Emily Milne
- Radiation Medicine Program at Princess Margaret
- GYN and Breast Radiation Oncologists

- Participating residents and faculty
References:

2. Thomas NK: Resident burnout. JAMA 292:2880-9, 2004
Thank you for your attention

Questions?