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EMJ (2022)

SURVEY OF CURRENT AND FORMER ACADEMIC CLINICAL FELLOWS IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE IN THE UK

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Aims/Objectives/Background: Academic emergency medicine (EM) is a young field in the United Kingdom (UK) with a small critical mass of clinical academics, who have protected time to conduct research alongside clinical duties. There is a little published information on the academic training available to emergency physicians. In the UK, academic clinical fellowships (ACFs) offer a structured opportunity for trainees to develop skills and experience in research alongside clinical training. We aimed to capture information on the prior experience of emergency medicine (EM) fellows, as well as how the ACFs were structured and the next career steps for fellows upon completion.

Methods/Design: A ten-question survey was designed by the project steering committee and circulated UK wide to all current fellows in EM and those that completed the programme in the last five years. Fellows were identified by contacting programme leads in every region. Data was collected via SurveyMonkey® between 18th February 2021 and 25th March 2021.

Results: We approached a total of 34 EM ACFs. The survey yielded a 91% (n=31) response rate (13 current, 18 completed within 5 years). One university from Wales and ten from England have supported EM ACF schemes. 59% (n=10) of those who have completed the scheme had their clinical training extended to accommodate research time. In the remainder, fellows were expected to achieve clinical competencies in the same time as trainees who did not spend time on research. In those who had completed the ACF programme (n=18), one third of respondents are doing PhD training (n=6) and one is an academic clinical lecturer.

Conclusion: We found variation in how the schemes are implemented. Future research is required to explore the experiences of those undertaking EM ACFs in more detail to identify the features of successful ACF training schemes, and whether any aspects may benefit from standardisation.