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The Role of Mentoring in Sustainability of Eye Care Systems

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Introduction: Harvey Firestone said "It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed".¹ John Maxwell said "A mentor is a person who is successful. (He walks alongside of you, a brain to pick, an ear to listen and has maturity (soundness, wisdom). He goes the way, shows the way and knows the way".²

I have 2 main mentors in my life. Firstly, my late father – Dr Edmund Akinochi who from a tender age infused his passion for ophthalmology into me with a desire to leave a legacy for future generations.^{3,4} The other is Dr Hassan whom I first met in 1997, when he visited my father; his words were so infectious that I became a disciple of the business of medicine and with a desire to pass knowledge to the next generation.⁵

Mentoring (informal and formal)⁶ and coaching are both intentional. Coaching entails transferring knowledge, giving instructions that will help develop skills, foster learning. Mentoring, a more intense relationship is built so that there's trust, openness and is performance driven unlike coaching which is task oriented.⁷ The mentor (who can also be a coach) is a role model, is mature and can maintain professionalism at all times, is compassionate, supportive and is willing to spend time and effort with the mentee. Mentors teach (on the job), guide, counsel, challenge, inspire their protégé. endorse their activities, help assist, and demonstrate trust.⁸ The Eye

Foundation hospital group has a Formal mentoring program⁶ whereby at the beginning of each year all residents (Mentees) are assigned to different senior consultants (Mentors). Both mentors and mentees give feedback of their experience.

Aim: To evaluate the role of mentoring as a key factor in sustainability of eyecare systems

Materials and Methods: Semi structured questions were sent to the current Ophthalmic Residents at the Eye Foundation Hospital. The variables considered were – the overall benefit, the gender of the mentor, psychosocial benefit. Influence on academics, degree attainment and retention. Qualitative analysis was with Epi-info version 3.5.1

Results: Seven out of 9 residents responded. Four (57%) respondents stated there was an overall benefit from the program while two (29%) respondents reported that there was no overall benefit (Figure 1). Four (57%) respondents stated there was an academic benefit while five (71%) respondents reported that there was benefit in degree attainment. Overall benefit was significantly associated with Psychosocial stability ($X^2 = 7.00$ p-value 0.0302) and Retention in the program ($X^2 = 14.00$ p-value 0.0073). Retention in the program and organization was significantly associated with Psychosocial stability ($X^2 = 7.00$ p-value 0.0302). Six (86%) of the respondents said the gender of the Mentor was important but this was not statistically related to any of the variables

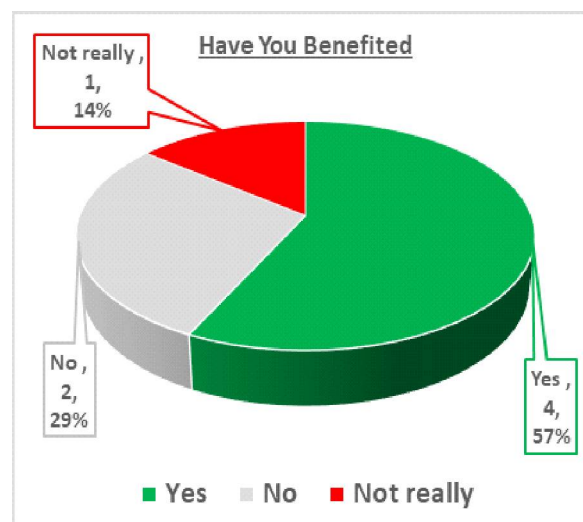


Figure 1. Overall benefit of mentoring

Discussion: These results are similar to what other studies have shown.^{6,9} It has been found that a well-designed mentoring programme is the foundation of a successful and sustainable learning organization.¹⁰ A commitment to these programs is necessary in order to create change agents that are willing to assume leadership roles and guide institutional evolution; a structured system of “matrix mentorship” and structured evaluation will advance institutional values and provide leaders with an essential set of skills and values consistent with institutional goals, causing a competitive advantage for medical centres in academic healthcare and hence sustainability.^{11,12,13}

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Pattern of Ocular and Adnexal Injuries in a Nigerian Tertiary Hospital

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Introduction: Eye injuries are defined as damage to the eyeball, its adnexae, orbital and