

# General Practice Outside Ministry of Health in Nepal

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## BACKGROUND

Postgraduate academic degree - Medical Doctorate in General Practice (MDGP) was started back in 1979 in order to support the health care system under the Ministry of Health (MoH).<sup>1</sup> The curriculum of the post graduate program in General Practice in Nepal has been designed to develop comprehensive and effective health care as well as timely life-saving surgical services in the district hospital.<sup>2</sup> Right from the beginning, compliance from the employer side has been less than expected. The ministry does not send the candidates for study. Furthermore, the graduates are not employed appropriately. The efforts of agencies like International Nepal Fellowship and Safe Motherhood Program in the past have failed. However, organizations like General Practitioners Association of Nepal (GPAN) and Nick Simon Institute (NSI) are pursuing hard to support the government system in order to provide comprehensive health care to the needy people. A holistic approach is necessary to review the policy related to MDGPs recruitment and retention.<sup>3</sup> To improve retention of GPs in the rural areas, there is a need to have a clear career ladder, with recognition of the value of service in rural areas.<sup>4</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Currently, more than two thirds of MDGP graduates are outside the employment umbrella of the Ministry of Health. Those engaged outside the MoH may be classified under five broad headings as follows:

**1. Medical Colleges:** Those employed under Tribhuvan University and B P Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, are actively involved in postgraduate academic activities at Department of General Practice & Emergency Medicine. Considering the national need, it is high time for medical colleges under Kathmandu University to start postgraduate program. Nepal is a country that could be expected to produce generalist doctors to manage its heavy burden of ill health<sup>5</sup>.

**2. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** MDGP graduates are preferred medical doctors in action-oriented national and international NGOs. Vacancies can be seen in national dailies very frequently. Furthermore, hospitals run by these organizations are involved in training MDGP residents. Inclusion of anesthesia training in MDGP program makes them capable of strengthening capacities on Emergency and Essential Surgical Care (EESC) at resource limited health facilities<sup>6</sup>.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

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**3. Private sector:** Private sector includes two different types of employment:

**a. Solo practice:** Mostly fairly senior GPs are in this category.

**b. Private hospital employment:** Most of the private hospitals have recognized GPs as specialist of comprehensive emergency care and/or general health checkup.

**4. Abroad:** There is fairly wide scope for employment abroad particularly in countries with high rate of foreign employment or migration from Nepal.

**5. Further study:** Some of the graduates seem to be interested to pursue studies mainly in subjects like surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology and emergency medicine.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the inefficiency of Ministry of Health to attract and absorb General Practitioners has negative impact in healthcare system but at the same time has positive impact in the professional development by widening the horizon of employment and scope of work.

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