

December 5th 2023

Dear Honorable Dr. Vijay Oza,

President Post-Graduate Medical Education Board

Subject: Proposal for Mandatory Neonatology Departments in Medical Colleges with 250 MBBS Admissions Annually

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for the successful implementation of significant reforms in medical education under the National Medical Commission (NMC). The strides made by NMC have set a benchmark globally, and we are proud of the progress achieved in such a short span of time.

I am writing to propose that every medical college and its associated teaching hospitals, which admit 250 MBBS students annually, should have a mandatory Neonatology department.

Currently, there are approximately 82 medical colleges with a capacity of 250 MBBS seats, and 64 colleges with 200 MBBS seats.

Current Situation:

- **Neonatology Seats: India currently has 5.5 DM Neonatology seats per one million newborns annually. In contrast, the USA has 73 Neonatology seats per one million newborns.** USA has 265 Neonatology fellowship seats for 3.6 million newborns. India currently has 109 DM Neonatology seats,
- This indicates a stark difference in the availability of specialized training for neonatologists between the two countries.
- **Neonatology Coverage: In the USA, there is one Neonatology seat for every 13,585 newborns, while in India there is one DM Neonatology seat for every 183,486 newborns.**

Recommendations:

1. **Mandatory Neonatology Departments:** If NMC mandates the establishment of Neonatology departments in institutions with 250 MBBS seats, it will impact approximately 82 colleges. Additionally, extending this requirement to colleges with 200 MBBS seats will affect an additional 64 colleges (excluding those already with Neonatology DM seats).
2. **Grandfather Clause Extension:** Extend the grandfather faculty clause for another 10 years to facilitate capacity building in Neonatology across India. This will help address the existing shortage and ensure a robust foundation for neonatal care.
3. **Training and Education:** Neonatologists are crucial for providing comprehensive care to critically ill infants and conducting antenatal consultations for high-risk pregnancies.

They also play a key role in lifelong training for nurses, primary care physicians, and pediatricians.

Global Comparison:

- **USA:** 265 Neonatology fellowship seats for 3.6 million newborns (73 seats per million newborns).
- **Australia:** 37 Neonatologists per 100,000 live births.
- **Canada:** 33 Neonatologists per 100,000 live births.
- **UK:** 27 Neonatologists per 100,000 live births.

India, with approximately 20 million births annually, needs more specialized Neonatologists to ensure adequate care and training across the country. The establishment of Neonatology departments in medical colleges will significantly enhance the capacity for neonatal care and improve outcomes for critically ill infants.

I respectfully urge the NMC to consider this proposal to strengthen Neonatology departments in medical colleges and support the expansion of specialized training in this vital field.

Thank you for considering this important initiative. I look forward to your positive response and am available for any further discussion or assistance needed.

Warm regards,

Lokesh Edara, MD,FAAAI,FACAAI
AAPI Global Medical Education