

INSIGHT INTO NATIONAL BREAST IMAGING ACADEMY FELLOWSHIP FOR PAKISTANI RADIOLOGISTS

Palwasha Gul,¹ Lisa Hamilton,² Sujanya Gadde,³ Stavrinou Paula⁴

¹ Breast Imaging Fellow, Nottingham University Hospital.

² National Working Group Representatives NBIA and Consultant Radiologist, Nottingham University Hospital.

³ NBIA Radiology Fellow Lead and Consultant Radiologist, Nightingale Centre Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust.

⁴ National Breast Imaging Academy Programme Manager, Nightingale Centre, MFT.

PJR April - June 2023; 33(2): 110-111

Breast Cancer is the most common female cancer with an incidence of around 1:8 women. Breast imaging is a crucial field in radiology which has made remarkable strides in helping reduce patient morbidity and mortality from breast cancer both through early detection and more accurate staging of disease. Breast imaging as a subspecialty has grown massively over time across the world. Unfortunately, it is still in its early phase of development in many resource constrained public sectors and limited to the best in class private hospitals in Pakistan. A few institutes in Pakistan are offering Breast Imaging Fellowship however these are not accredited with College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPSP).

In this communication we will provide information about the UK based structured National Breast Imaging Academy (NBIA) Fellowship and what scope it has for Pakistan and Pakistani Radiologists (PR). The NBIA Fellowship programme is a national collaborative venture, designed to promote excellence in breast imaging. It is intended to offer a gold-standard Fellowship programme that will raise the profile and prestige of breast imaging and provide enhanced training above and beyond Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) higher breast training. Talented trainees are equipped with the skills to become the leaders, educators and researchers of the future using the collective expertise and experience of the breast imaging community to deliver world-class training. The programme is funded by NHS England, run by Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust who work in collaboration with the Royal College of Radiologists and British Society of Breast Radiology.

The NBIA fellowship is designed to be single subspecialty training opportunity and Fellows will train in various aspects of breast imaging whilst supporting general radiology service delivery. Fellows who are interested in developing their skills in research, leadership and teaching will be encouraged and supported to do so and the NBIA will facilitate access to opportunities to progress in these areas. Fellows will also be given access to dedicated online resources (e-LfH) developed by the NBIA. Each fellow will have an identified Educational Supervisor (ES) who will monitor progress throughout the year and provide the NBIA panel with an end of year evaluation document. Subject to satisfactory progression the Fellow will be awarded with a Certificate of completion of Fellowship at the end of the 12 month fellowship period. The NBIA encourages the fellow to undertake NBIA funded breast imaging courses and conferences whilst on their placement.

The application process opens once a year, different placements are available depending on host site availability. Applicants apply for places through a centralized online recruitment process followed by a competitive interview for shortlisted candidates. Successful candidates are placed in eligible host breast units across England for one year. There, the fellows will be supervised and mentored as they undergo the majority of their training. UK-trained radiologists who are post-CCT level and overseas radiologists with equivalent qualifications, which will include PRs who are post FCPS (Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan), are eligible to apply for the NBIA fellowship. PLAB, FRCR or

Correspondence : Dr. Palwasha Gul
Breast Imaging Fellow,
Nottingham University Hospital.
Email: palwasha.gul@nuh.nhs.uk

Submitted 17 May 2023, Accepted 14 June 2023



GMC registration are not essential to apply for the fellowship. Successful applicants will be able to apply for GMC registration through MTI/ sponsorship route. Required IELTS score or required Grade in OET however is mandatory prior to application. Having the FRCR is a significant advantage enabling the fellow to get GMC registration through a higher route making the process simpler. After selection applicants are given a list of potential host sites and asked to rank the host sites in order of preference. Successful candidates are then matched to host sites in order of interview score. Candidates with the highest scores are most likely to be matched to their preferred unit. The scheme has already appointed 31 fellows from around the world to 19 breast units across England since launch of the programme in September 2019. Of the 15 who have completed the programme, 13 have taken up substantive Consultant posts at their training hospital or in other breast units in England. Two radiologists from Pakistan have successfully completed their training from the NBIA and three radiologists are currently undertaking the fellowship.

Conclusion

The NBIA fellowship is a great opportunity for Pakistani Radiologists to acquire dedicated breast imaging skills. The Fellowship not only offers exposure to the most up to date theoretical and advanced practical learning but also gives a taste of the NHS and UK culture. Timing of the Fellowship after completion of FCPS makes it more appealing with no additional

workload of PLAB. Although FRCR can aid in a more successful application, is not essential requirement for the Fellowship. I believe Pakistani Radiologists have a great potential to be selected for the Fellowship after they have completed FCPS and have a lot of enthusiasm and motivation to offer the NHS. After successful completion of the Fellowship they can chose to either continue to work in the UK or can bring back the knowledge and skill to Pakistan. There are very few breast radiologists in Pakistan which means many women still receive care from a non-specialist and are denied the full range of modern treatment options and consequently suffer inferior outcomes. Bringing the skill to Pakistan will not only elevate radiology training but will significantly improve patient care. With more Fellowship trained breast radiologists in the country a dedicated breast Fellowship programme can also be started in Pakistan which could later be negotiated for accreditation by College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan.

Almost 15% of breast radiologist posts are vacant in UK and by 2025 around 40% of the current senior workforce are expected to retire. This means those who are trained in breast imaging and are interested in pursuing career in the UK will have a great future opportunity to work in the field with the satisfaction of providing better quality of services to the breast cancer patients.

<https://nationalbreastimagingacademy.org/about-radiology/nbia-fellowship/>

<https://nationalbreastimagingacademy.org/about/breast-imaging/career-blogs/>

NBIA Breast Radiology Fellowship
NHS

Develop your career in breast radiology

The NBIA breast radiology fellowship programme, launched in September 2019, is a unique training opportunity for aspiring breast radiologists. Developed in collaboration with leading NHS breast units in England it:

- Offers high quality standardised training in breast radiology
- Challenges talented trainees to reach their full potential
- Aims to develop the leaders, educators and researchers of the future

The one-year programme enables fellows to enhance their skills in all aspects of breast imaging while they support radiology service delivery. Fellows gain core clinical experience at their host NHS Trust, which is supplemented by NBIA online resources and study blocks.

The scheme has already appointed 31 fellows from around the world. Of the 15 who have completed the programme so far, 13 have taken up permanent/substantive consultant posts.

"The protected clinical sessions give you hands on clinical experience... and the e-learning modules provide quality standardised teaching in one place. The fellowship provides all the necessary clinical skills and academic knowledge you need to work as a consultant in the future."

Dr Saad Khattab Chaudhry
Fellow 201/22, University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Who can apply

- UK radiology trainees due to attain CCT prior to the start date of the fellowship
- UK radiologists who already hold a CCT
- Overseas radiologists with equivalent qualifications (and who meet International Sponsorship Scheme criteria if applicable)

What the NBIA offers

- Virtual international recruitment process
- UK entry support for international appointees
- Dedicated online resources, study blocks and study leave budget
- Networking opportunities

Find out more

breastacademy@nhs.uk
<https://nationalbreastimagingacademy.org/>
- Best site & candidate information