

Essay on specialization and sub-specialization

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Specialization and sub specialization in medicine refers to the practice of medical scientists devoting their effort and intellect in having an in depth knowledge of narrower areas of medicine. It involves differentiating general practitioners of medicine into doctors with various specific fields of expertise. Ophthalmology was the first specialty field to create its own assessment board. Modern hospitals have placed emphasis on specialization and sub specialization. There various advantages and disadvantages of specialization and sub specialization both to physicians and patients. This paper discusses the various advantages and disadvantages.

The first advantage of specialization and sub specialization is that it has led to increased research and development in the various fields of medicine.

Advancements in modern medicine have mostly been driven by the continued specialization of medical practitioners. As medical scientists devote their effort and intellect in having an in depth knowledge of narrower areas of medicine, they are more likely to come up with new medical discoveries and cures. This is because they have a grasp of a narrower field and it is therefore easier to concentrate on the minute details that a general practitioner may not have time to multiplicity of fields he or she deals with. Secondly, lifestyle changes and environmental degradation has led to development of specific population who require a highly focused skill set and knowledge. For example, hematology and advanced heart failure transplant patients may require extra medical care both before and after a transplant has been done. Therefore, this group of patients will benefit more from specialist physicians with high focused skill set and knowledge beyond that of a general cardiologist.

Lastly, specialization enables medical practitioners to deliver timely, precise and more accurate diagnosis because they have a vast knowledge in their field of specialty. When medical practitioners are classified according to their expertise, it allows collaboration, promotes peer consultation, and knowledge sharing thus reducing the chances of a wrong diagnosis. Patients will benefit by improved medical service delivery and care, efficiency and cost effectiveness.

There are several disadvantages of specialization and sub specialization. First, specialization fragments medical care services which has resulted in undervaluing generalist or personal physicians who are an integral part of good patient care. Personal physicians make long term relationships with their clients and are often relied on by other specialists to rely information concerning their patients' medical history. With increased specialization, generalist physicians will have a limited scope and will therefore be an unattractive alternative for patients. This makes it difficult for physicians to obtain the medical history of their patients since an average patient may not keep such records.

Specialization increases the cost of medical care and services. Most physicians begin as generalist and then specialize in particular fields later on. A specialist therefore takes more time to qualify as compared to a generalist. In addition most specialists are required to join a professional board and be certified by the same board, for example, Ophthalmologists practicing in the U. S must be certified by American Ophthalmological Society. The training fee, certification fee and membership renewal fees are passed to consumers of medical services in form of higher fees.

In conclusion, the advantages of specialization and sub specialization in medicine outweigh the disadvantages. Modern hospitals should promote specialization and sub specialization to obtain the advantages discussed above. However, generalist physicians should not be eliminated because they also play an integral part in the society.

Works Cited

Rosenblum, Michael. The Decline of American Medicine: Where Have All the Doctors Gone? illustrated. New york: iUniverse, 2003.