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Qualities Perceived by Israeli Psychiatric Residents to Be Most Important to Them in a Mentor and a Mentoring Relationship

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Introduction: Residency is a crucial period in the medical education continuum. Studies have shown the importance of a good developmental relationship (mentoring) as a key factor for professional success in medicine. Israeli organizational culture at academic health centers does not support a formal mentoring program.

Objectives: This study is part of a research program aimed at improving residency in Israel by understanding the characteristics of Israeli residents.

Aims: Identify the personal, academic and organizational qualities perceived by Israeli residents to be most important in a mentor.

Methods: Israeli psychiatric residents were asked to complete 2 anonymous questionnaires that assess the relative importance of qualities for a good mentor on a five-point Likert scale: the 34-item Ideal Mentor Scale (IMS) and the 40-item Qualities of a Good Mentor Scale (QGMS).

Results: A total of 63 residents from 13 programs completed the questionnaires. In the IMS most emphasis was on the Integrity subscale representing a mentoring style that embodies respectfulness, empowers to make deliberate, conscious choices, exhibits virtue and principled action and is worthy of emulation as a role model over an academic guide, supervisor, researcher or friend. This tendency was marked in centrally located training programs over peripheral ones. QGMS shows this tendency increase the more years the resident in residency.

Conclusions: The Israeli resident seems to need a nurturing parental mentor, someone to believe in him and see his unique potential over an academic mentor promoting research. This tendency is discussed as a part of the historical change in medical education.