

Continuous education of the surgeon: a professional, academic, ethical, and social commitment

La formación continua del cirujano: un compromiso profesional, académico, ético, y social

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Surgery is a profoundly dynamic discipline, subject to the constant advancement of medical knowledge, evolving social expectations, and technological innovation. In this setting, the continuous training of surgeons is not an option but an essential condition for sustaining quality and safety in surgical care. Surgical practice demands ongoing updates not only to operative techniques but also to the diagnostic, attitudinal, and ethical competencies that define professional performance.

In Latin America, the challenges of surgical training are multiple and shared: limited residency periods, disparities in the conditions across training centers, a lack of curricular uniformity, and the limited use of active methodologies such as surgical simulation. To these are added the contrasts between large central hospitals and surgical units of medium or low complexity, where the role of the general surgeon remains essential — both for managing prevalent pathologies and for responding to emergencies without subspecialty support.

Within this context, the general surgeon should be regarded not as an intermediate step toward subspecialization, but as a cornerstone of the healthcare system. Their training must enable them to act safely across a broad range of conditions, incorporate technological advances in the field, apply sound referral criteria, and — above all — maintain resolute capacity in adverse settings. This calls for a comprehensive, rigorous, and sustained training process.


In Paraguay, training institutions must take a leading role in strengthening surgical residency programs that incorporate new pedagogical strategies, simulation spaces, objective competency assessments, and a progressive decentralization of clinical training toward medium-complexity hospitals. Equally urgent is the reinforcement of training in cross-cutting areas such as doctor-patient communication, decision-making in critical contexts, professional ethics, clinical research, and health management.

The challenge does not end with the residency period. Continuous education must accompany the surgeon throughout their career. It is imperative to move toward systematic mechanisms for continuing medical education, certification, and recertification, in coordination with scientific societies, professional colleges, and universities. This continuity in training responds not only to the demands of modern medical practice but also to an ethical commitment to patients and society.

From the Paraguayan Society of Surgery, we reaffirm the importance of consolidating a surgical training model that reflects the country's specific realities, is sensitive to existing inequities, and aligns with the health challenges of our population. We consider it essential to promote the development of appropriate training standards, foster learning dynamics that enable the progressive acquisition of competencies and encourage integration across the various levels of complexity within the health system. We also recognize the value of structured evaluation processes, equitable access to ongoing professional development, and the sustained incorporation of technological advances in training. Likewise, we emphasize the need to strengthen research training as a basis for reflective and critical practice, and to promote greater engagement and leadership of Paraguayan surgery at the regional and international levels through academic exchange, participation in scientific forums, and the production of knowledge with local identity and global rigor. All efforts aimed at strengthening surgical training must ultimately serve the goals of quality, patient safety, and a steadfast commitment to a humane and responsible surgery.

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