

MENTORING AND SUPERVISORY ACTIVITIES IN OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

¹Nwaorgu O.G.B., ²Ezeanolue B.C.

¹College of Medicine University of Ibadan and University College Hospital Ibadan, Nigeria, ²College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Ituku Ozalla Campus.

ABSTRACT

This paper addressed the similarities and differences between mentoring and supervising in an academic setting. It explores the mentoring and supervisory activities in the training of an Otorhinolaryngologist Head and Neck Surgeon in Nigeria.

Training in the science and art of Otorhinolaryngology Head-and-Neck Surgery involves a teaching and learning process between a person with knowledge, skills, and competence, and a person without such knowledge, skills nor competences. In this process it is necessary to evolve the relationship of mentor and mentee or a supervisor and supervisee.

The paper's methodology relied on published works, personal interactions with trainers and trainee and personal experience over many years of teaching in the university and tertiary health facilities.

It concluded that overlap exists between the roles of mentors and supervisors. Mentors have wide vested interest in caring for an individual's success and long-term development holistically. Supervisors provide direction and enforcement to successful completion of tasks.

Key words: Mentor, supervisor, training Otorhinolaryngology Head and neck Surgery

Correspondence:

Nwaorgu O.G.B.

Department of Otorhinolaryngology, University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Email: gnwaorgu@comui.edu.ng

** (This is a text of a presentation at a symposium themed “The making of an Otorhinolaryngologist, Head and Neck Surgeon” on 10th November 2023 at Enugu, Nigeria)*

INTRODUCTION

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a learning process where helpful, personal, and reciprocal relationships are built while focusing on achievement. Note that emotional support is a key element.¹

Mentoring is a personal and reciprocal relationship in which a more experienced faculty member acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced (usually younger) student or faculty member².

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a **mentor** as a person who offers support and guidance to another; what may be described as an experienced and trusted counsellor or friend³.

A mentor provides the mentee with knowledge, advice, counsel, challenge, and support in the mentee's pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession.”²

In this, mentees develop and learn through conversations with more experienced mentors who share knowledge and skills that can be incorporated into their thinking and practice.

What is supervising?

Supervising role is task oriented. The supervisor oversees the work/task being done and guides the subordinate in successful completion of the task.

There is an overlap of activities between mentoring and supervising that one may ask if mentoring and supervisory activities are the same?

However, a major difference between supervision and mentoring is that **supervision is often task-oriented** (e.g., completion of a thesis or dissertation) **whereas mentoring is more about caring for an individual's long-term development holistically.**

MENTORING

Types of mentoring⁴.

One-on-One Mentoring:

The traditional model of mentoring is the one-on-one model, where one mentor and one mentee agree to enter a mentorship relationship to help the mentees develop, improve, and achieve their goals.

Peer Mentoring: This is like one-on-one mentoring. In this, two people come together in a mentorship but both parties are from a similar job level or age range.

Group Mentoring: This involves one mentor working with several mentees in a group. This model helps to reach and impact more mentees in a shorter amount of time than traditional mentoring.

Reverse Mentoring: A junior person mentors a senior person in an organization. It is *essentially, traditional mentoring in reverse*, it is to close the existence of skill gaps and learning opportunities on both sides of a mentoring relationship and may be used for up-skilling senior employees for example on digital technology.

Flash mentoring: refers to quick one-off mentoring session aimed at learning a key piece of information or skill.

Team mentoring: involves a group of mentors and a group of mentees who carry out mentoring sessions as a team.

Virtual/Distance Mentoring: The advent of remote work has become and remains to be vital in our modern working lives, and with that virtual or distance learning and mentoring is evolved.

Characteristics of Mentoring⁵.

One characteristic of mentoring process is focusing on the overall development and aspirations of the mentee. The relationship being professional and, to some extent, personal. Mentees sharing whatever critical issues impact their professional and personal success. The relationship being a long term one between the mentor and the mentee.

Who is mentoring for in the academic environment?

In the situation of an academic environment, mentoring of all types is available to students, residents, and even academic staff.

The right kind of support given by a mentor if the mentee is willing to take responsibility for his/her goals, reflect on what he/she desires out of the relationship, and be able to commit to driving the relationship forward.

The mentee should desire to learn and grow by working with a mentor who can:

- provide feedback and help them find their own

solutions. The mentor provides valuable pieces of advice and expertise to help develop specific skills.

How does a Mentoring Relationship work?

The process of mentoring may be viewed under three models – the apprentice, competency, and reflective models.¹

In the apprentice model, the mentee observes the mentor and learns. In the competency model, the mentor gives the mentee systematic feedback about performance and progress. In the **reflective model**, the mentor helps the mentee become a reflective practitioner. The reflective model is seen as an intentional, nurturing, and insightful process that provides a powerful growth experience for both the mentor and mentee.

Mentees are encouraged to either find their own mentor or have a mentor assigned by the Dean, HOD/Supervisor or Program Director. Thus, mentoring relationships can be formal or informal.¹

Formal mentor relationships are usually organized in the institution where the authorities match mentors to mentees.

Informal mentor relationships usually occur spontaneously and are largely psychosocial; they help to enhance the mentee's self-esteem and confidence by providing emotional support and discovery of common interests.

Mentees initiate the first meeting/contact, where they establish whether the mentor would be able to meet the mentees needs. They establish the boundaries of the relationship, probable length, when and how they will 'meet', ways of working, confidentiality, most importantly: learning and development of objectives. There is no fixed time that mentoring relationships are expected to last. It is an issue for the mentee and mentor to decide as it depends often on the mentee's needs.

What is expected of a mentor and a mentee?

An effective mentor is most described as available, approachable, experienced, supportive, trustworthy, enthusiastic, encouraging, and an active listener.⁶

The mentor will establish which solution a mentee will take forward and next steps to help explore mentee's Current Challenges. He discusses mentee's choices and options, highlighting what the possible outcomes of these options may be.

A mentee is expected to be prepared to drive the mentoring relationship forward and take ownership of his/her learning. The mentee should identify his/her development goals and decide how to work towards realizing them, agree and commit to a schedule of meetings, prepare for meetings and undertake any agreed actions, and maintain the confidentiality of the relationship.

TABLE 1: Characteristics of effective mentors and mentees^{6,7,8,9}

Mentor ^{6,7}	Mentee ^{8,9}
Role Model for Mentee	Proactive
Available	Committed
Approachable	Willing to learn
Experienced	Excited
Supportive	Open minded
Provides wisdom	Communicative
Shapes skills	Self aware and reflective
Facilitate growth	
Trustworthy	
Active listener	
Enthusiastic	
Encouraging	
Pass on lessons learned	
Collaborative	

Structured mentorship program in Otolaryngology Practice

Is there any existing structured mentorship ORL program? In the USA, only one half of United States otolaryngology residency programs have formal mentoring programs¹⁰. Data shows that smaller programs with fewer faculty and fewer residents were less likely to have formal mentoring programs.

In Nigeria, no formal structured ORL mentorship program exists. Faculty and residents perhaps interact so closely that formal mentoring is not seen as a critical need.¹⁰

The Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) Mentorship Program: study

involved 19 mentors and 24 mentees evaluating their 10-year experience with a formal mentoring program⁷. The response rate to the survey was 100%. Mentors were the same gender and race as their mentee 60% and 65% of the time, respectively. Forty-seven percent of the meetings took place formally. Fifty-three percent of participants met biannually, 30% more frequently. 66% mentors and 75% mentees felt the program was effective while 33% and 17%, respectively, were neutral, and 0% & 8% were ineffective. 73% of mentors felt a sense of responsibility for the success of their mentee, yet 87% would not mind if their mentee changed mentors. 80% of mentors and 83% of mentees felt the program should be continued while 20% and 4%, respectively, were neutral and 0% and 13% felt the program should be discontinued¹¹.

SUPERVISION

The Supervisor's role¹².

The supervisor has multiple roles to play in the assignment or tasks being done.

Educating/Teaching: Establishing an infrastructure that supports and guides the trainee/student's progress (e.g., helping students set goals, providing templates for grant-writing).

Sponsoring: It is assumed that the student has the skills needed to perform their current jobs and work to provide opportunities for them to showcase their talents and strengths by helping students secure funding or grant

Coaching: Providing advice, correcting, encouragement, progress tracking and support.

Counselling: is used when an employee's problems impact performance and is intended to mitigate any further action, including formal disciplinary action.

Directing: is used when performance problems continue and assumes that the staff has been educated, coached, and counselled. During "directing" conversations, you should make recommended alternatives and consequences clear.

Supervisory roles in Otorhinolaryngology include teaching in clinics, ward rounds, Grand rounds, consultative, and research activities, performing bedside surgical and diagnostic procedures. Imparting sound clinical judgment and solid operative skills in all facets of otolaryngology with respect to *indications, complications, alternatives, and expected outcomes of all Specialty/sub-specialty procedures*. Thus, emphasis is on gaining experience with full spectrum of procedures, honing proficiency, and balancing quality of patient evaluation and care with improved overall efficiency.

Supervision of Thesis/Dissertation

Preamble

Part of the goal of postgraduate education is not only for the purpose of earning a degree or certificate, but also for creating new knowledge in the field of one's interests. To qualify for the Fellowship certificate, the resident must complete his/her own research thesis/dissertation. The thesis/dissertation is a major work of scientific inquiry submitted by a scholar to an institution; be it a university or an equivalent academic or professional body, for the purpose of obtaining certification in his/her discipline.

The first stage in the preparation of a research thesis/dissertation is the submission of a **proposal** on a specific chosen topic. It is

expected that such a topic will impact positively on the wellbeing of mankind. It should address a problem/hypothesis of importance and provide needed answers to the research problems based on the results of well-structured research.

Here, I outline a summary of the steps needed for a successful research dissertation and the requirements of the postgraduate Colleges.

- All thesis/dissertations for WACS/NPMCN Part II exams must be preceded by an approved proposal.
- Attestation Page must be signed and dated by the supervisor(s) with Fellowship qualifications stated. (Photocopy is not allowed)
- The Lead Supervisor must be a Fellow of the relevant College. If there is more than one Supervisor.
- If only a supervisor, the person must be a Fellow of the College not \leq 5yrs post Fellowship.
- Following success at the membership/Part I Fellowship exams the resident is expected to conduct a research project.
- This requires supervision by a supervisor to undertake research with quality process for the best possible dissertation output.

How does one get a supervisor?

It is not always easy to have a smooth sail and end the project with the best output. Like a marriage, the feelings of happiness, sadness, sorrow, and some other feelings may occur. Supervision is a well-defined interpersonal relationship between the supervisor/s and the resident/s.

Supervisory duties are professional roles. He/she concurrently may act in many roles as a: *coach, teacher, friend, colleague, trainer, good role model, and guide*. These roles may be broadly classified into the following:

Management: As with marriage, both student and supervisor should have mutual trust and agreement to work together. They take responsibility so that the student and the supervisor to work on time management on meetings, deadlines, and goals.

Administrative support: A trainee may need help acquiring funds and other resources.

Sometimes, many regulations and some administrative difficulty within the institution/country may be an obstacle to the research progress.

The supervisor should be able to provide support and help the resident to overcome such problems.

Specific technical support: The skill that needs to be trained –e.g.: skill in using the specific software/equipment,

Broadening intellectual support: It is very important to help residents to have an ability to develop his/her critical thinking and discussion by providing or guiding to the high-level knowledge and the specialist in the field of study.

Personal support: Such as emotional support, motivation, encouragement, or feedback, giving advice, unhindered access and listening to personal issues can improve work and relationship. Help could be given in searching the relevant literature, using the library, providing contacts with the researcher in the field, structuring the dissertation, and training in critical reading—all these skills should be assisted by the supervisor.

Thus, aside coaching and training, the supervisor also acts as a good role model who listens and guides the trainee to achieve the set goal. Research has shown that constant, thoughtful supervision, and availability is the key to successful research program completion. Northouse. posited that a good supervisor requires leadership skills: (a mixture of three-skill approach –technical skill, human skill, and conceptual skill; all aimed to help in producing the best outcome ¹³.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, good quality mentoring is a facilitative, developmental, and positive process which requires adequate time, intentional discourse, mutual respect, and a willingness to support the relationship ¹⁴.

A mentor has vested interest in the success of his or her mentee, while a role model is someone from whom one learns through observation.

Supervisors provide direction and enforcement. A lot of overlap exists between the roles of mentoring and supervision.

Acknowledgements

Professor Donald NZE (2nd VP WACS 2012)

Professor Akinyinka Omigbodun and Professor B Ugwu – their lectures during the WACS workshop on Training of Examiners

REFERENCES:

1. Wong AT, Premkumar K. (2007). An Introduction to Mentoring Principles Processes and Strategies for Facilitating Mentoring Relationships at a Distance. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228603950>.
2. Johnson B. On Being a Mentor A Guide for Higher Education Faculty, Second Edition. Routledge Tylor and Francis group. 2015.
3. Oxford English dictionary. view-source:https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/mentor_1?q=Mentor (Accessed October 2023)
4. Cronin N (2020). Type of mentoring. <https://guider-ai.com/blog/types-of-mentoring/> [Accessed 12/10/23]
5. Hamied Y. (2023). Introduction to mentoring. Department of Chemistry University of Cambridge. <https://www.ch.cam.ac.uk/pdac/files/Introduction%20%20to%20Mentoring.pdf>
6. Goldner L, Ofra, M. The quality of mentoring relationships and mentoring success. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 2009; 38: 1339–1350
7. American Psychological Association [APA] Presidential Task Force. (2012). Introduction to mentoring: A guide for mentors and mentees. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/education-career/grad/mentoring>
8. Thomas-McLean R, Hamoline R, Quinlan E, Ramsden VR, Kuzmich J. Discussing mentorship. Canadian Family Physician, 2010; 56(7): 263–272.
9. Williams LL, Levine JB., Malhotra S, Holzheimer P. The good-enough mentoring relationship. Academic Psychiatry, 2004; 28(2): 111–115.
10. Gurgel RK, Schiff BA, Flint JH, Miller RA, Zahtz JD, Smith RV et al. Mentoring in otolaryngology training programs. Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. 2010; 142:487-492
11. Geltzeiler MN, Jessyka G, Lighthall JG, Wax MK. Mentorship in Otolaryngology: 10 Years of Experience. Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery. 2013; 148(2): 338–340.
12. Kumar S. (2022). UHR – Employee Development the Five Roles of a Supervisor. <https://www.academia.edu/15001085/UHR> (Accessed October 2023)
13. Northouse P (2010). Leadership: Theory and practice (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage. 2010.
14. Hill SEM, Ward WL, Seay A, Buzenski J. Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Setting. 2022; 29:557-569.