
Role of leadership development in cardiology



The healthcare landscape is becoming increasingly complex day by day and with this complexity come new challenges for clinicians, especially cardiovascular fellows in training (FITs) and early career professionals (ECPs). As the healthcare industry continues to change, the lack of training in nonclinical competencies becomes more evident.

In this new era of healthcare, it is important to understand that the title "leader" is no longer limited to a certain rank or designation. Leadership in cardiology is expected from each physician - both independently and collaboratively. There is no doubt FITs and ECPs are quite accomplished, highly sophisticated and intellectually curious, but it is the mastery of nonclinical competencies such as leadership development that will eventually determine how far they go in their career.

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Academic medical institutions, as well as private practices, now require physicians to use emotional intelligence as well as be open to change. They are also expected to operate as capable and competent leaders but usually have no formal training or guidance in this regard. This lack of training has created a "readiness gap" in healthcare organisations making leadership development an important priority across hospitals.

The ACC Leadership Academy Program

Findings from data obtained from 2 cohort experiences with 30 FITs/ECPs, the 2-year American College of Cardiology's (ACC's) Leadership Academy (LA) Program shows effectiveness for participants both within the College and within their respective institutions. It also illustrates how leadership development programmes could shape and influence the CV practitioner. This two-year programme addresses various leadership-specific competencies.

Previous studies already show the important role mentorship can play in cultivating the professional growth and development of FITs and ECPs. In the ACC Leadership Academy Program, a senior mentor is assigned to each LA appointee through a manual matching algorithm. The goal is to allow these senior members to guide CV leaders of the future.

These cardiovascular leaders of the future need to embrace their leadership journey by training themselves to face the following challenges:

- Assessing change readiness and leading through change
- Coaching
- Innovating
- Quality improvement
- Working across generations
- Working with the right people to build high-performing organisations

For emerging leaders of the future, skill acquisition and enhancement are integral for their success. The entire curriculum of the ACC Leadership Program is based on one simple question: "What keeps you up at night?" The answer to this question includes a list of potential challenges facing healthcare in general and cardiology in particular:

- Conflict management
- Team leadership
- Influencing others
- Navigating challenging conversations
- Achieving work-life balance

The ACC Leadership Program has been designed to address these unmet needs. A survey was conducted to assess the outcomes of this programme. Findings show that there was an overall positive impact on each participant. The programme helped them navigate from the silo of

an individual practitioner to the complex milieu of team-based cardiovascular care. There was a measurable increase in the primary domains of emotional intelligence including self-awareness, self-regulation, relationship management, and social awareness. Overall, the skills acquired through the ACC Leadership Program have the potential to empower FITs and ECPs to transition to leadership roles early on in their career.

Source: [Journal of the American College of Cardiology](#)

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