

My No. MAD 43/93
Office of the Director General of Health Services,
385,"Suwasiripaya",
Deans Road,
Colombo 10,
5th Oct.1993.

To: All Directors of Teaching Hospitals,
Medical Superintendents of Provincial Hospitals,
District Medical Officers of Base Hospitals.

The Role of Senior House Officers (without Postgraduate Qualifications) Appointed to Surgical, Gynaecological and Obstetrics Units in Teaching, Provincial and Base Hospitals.

These appointments have been made with the sole objective of providing **better quality patients** care in the respective units.

Since these SHOO have no Postgraduate qualifications in the Specialty, the responsibility of providing adequate training to them rests with the Consultants of the units.

The Senior House Officers are expected to assist the respective Consultants in the units in providing efficient and effective care to the patients. The SHOO shall assist the Consultants in the ward rounds, at Specialist Clinics and in the Operating Theatre. Patients operated must be constantly monitored by the SHOO till the patient is out of danger. They shall guide the Intern Medical Officers and be on call to the Units and promptly respond to such calls either from Intern Medical Officer or from the wards. SHOO shall carryout these duties under the direction and supervision of the consultants in-charge of the Units.

Surgical/Obstetric/Gynaecological Operations performed by SHOO

- a) Before SHOO are permitted to operate, the competency and capability of the officers have to be determined and assessed carefully by Consultants of the Units.
- b) Once the Consultants are satisfied with the competence of the officers they may be permitted to operate provided the Consultants are **physically present** in the Operating theatre, readily available for any eventuality.
- c) Once the SHOO have proved their competence, they may be allowed to undertake minor/intermediate, Surgical/Obstetric/Gynaecological Operations, provided the Consultants of

the Units are **available physically** in the hospital who could be summoned immediately in case of emergency. (Here the hospital does not denote the quarters)

- d) All patients with complications must be personally operated on by the Consultants and not left to the SHOO under any circumstances.
- e) In Base Hospitals where only a single Consultant is available, SHOO shall not undertake Surgical/Obstetric/Gynaecological Operations while the consultant is on leave, except in very exceptional circumstances where surgical intervention is called for, to save the life of a patient. In such situations, the Consultant who is acting for the Unit (who may be a Surgeon or Obstetrician) depending on the situation must be consulted. In these instances, the DMO should be kept informed.
- f) Under no circumstances should a Consultant proceeding on leave either for short or long periods, issue instructions and give blanket cover to the SHOO to operate on patients in the absence of the Consultant. The Consultant acting on his/her behalf would decide on the course of action in regard to any patient.
- g) In all instances, the sole responsibility for patients admitted to Units rests with the Consultants of the Units. SHOO should not be substituted for Consultants.
- h) In all situations, absolute safety and welfare of the patients is paramount. It is the sacred duty of all Consultants, SHOO, Interns, to provide the best possible care and treatment to the patients.

All directors of Teaching Hospitals, Medical Superintendents of Provincial Hospitals, and District Medical Officers of Base Hospitals, are kindly requested to bring the contents of this Circular to the notice of all Consultants as well as SHOO. They would do well to get the concerned officers to note the contents of this Circular.

Dr. Joe Fernando
Secretary,
Ministry of Health & Women's Affairs

Cc. Provincial Directors of Health Services/Dep. Prov. Directors of Health Services.