

## A Longitudinal Analysis of 25 Years of Foot & Ankle Fellowship Training

Kamran S. Hamid, MD, MPH, James A. Nunley, MD

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**Introduction/Purpose:** There is a growing demand for orthopaedic surgeons trained in management of foot and ankle conditions, yet there remains wide variation in the process of fellowship training and a dearth of outcomes assessment. The 2016-2017 American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society (AOFAS) Fellowship Match consisted of 75 available positions—a 44% increase over that a decade prior. Of the 48 programs offering positions, 6 offer standardization and oversight by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). We aimed to assess the educational curriculum, research production and career paths of 25 years of graduates from the longest running ACGME accredited foot and ankle fellowship program in the United States.

**Methods:** A database of graduates from a single foot and ankle fellowship program was utilized to identify practice types and locations as well as tabulate PubMed indexed articles authored by fellows while in the program. The educational curriculum corresponding to their training is described. Additionally, historical data from the AOFAS Match Program was evaluated for trends.

**Results:** Between 2005-2015, there were 515 graduates of AOFAS sponsored foot & ankle fellowship programs in the U.S. (Figure 1). Successful match rates for fellowship applicants ranged from 80-96% and program fill rates varied between 61-93%. Our fellowship program has graduated 50 fellows in the past 25 years of whom 37 (74%) practice in the U.S. and 13 (26%) practice abroad. When accounting for international, military and academic practitioners, 54% of our graduates entered practice types with a teaching component. Research articles for each fellow were examined and on average 1.9 PubMed indexed articles (range 0-12) were published by fellows during their tenure in the program. Graduates going into military, international and U.S. academic practices published 2.5, 2.8 and 3.7 articles during training, respectively.

**Conclusion:** As technical and cognitive demands of foot and ankle surgeons increase, the need for optimized fellowship training has become paramount. Assessment of educational curriculum, research production and graduate practice type may help fellowships identify areas for improvement in order to meet program and trainee goals.

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