

## Is there a need for expanding hand fellowship training ? Results of a hand fellowship graduate survey

Sanjeev Kakar MD, Karim Bakri MD, Alexander Y Shin MD  
Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN



### Objectives

1. To survey recent hand fellowship graduates' opinions on the current status of hand fellowship training, including perceived competence, deficiencies and opportunities for subspecialist training
2. To evaluate interest among hand surgeons for increasing the length of training

### Study design and participants

E-surveys (38 questions) were sent to 248 recent hand fellowship graduates (2008-2010)

All responses were anonymous

131 (53%) participants responded and were from the following specialties :

Orthopaedic Surgery 74 %  
Plastic Surgery 16 %  
General Surgery 10 %

69% in private practice, 31% academic

Mean number of cases 641 (100-1500)

### Dedicated subspecialty training during fellowship

Did you have a dedicated Plastic Surgery rotation ?

No - 52% Yes - 48%

Did you have dedicated shoulder +/- elbow training ?

None - 40% Both - 21% Shoulder - 14% Elbow - 24%

Did you have the opportunity to do a Microsurgery Course ?

No - 39% Yes - 61%

### Perceived deficiencies by specialty

#### Orthopaedics trainees

34% no exposure to brachial plexus

27% never involved in free flap

11% never done replant

#### Plastic surgery trainees

43% no experience in both bone fx

29% never involved in VBG

### Competence level assessed by VAS 0-100

#### Subspecialty vs Procedure

	Replant	Free flap	Distal radius	Both bone fx	Elbow fracture
<b>Ortho</b>	60%	30%	95%	94%	82%
<b>Plastic</b>	89%	92%	84%	41%	16%
<b>GS</b>	63%	47%	75%	47%	33%

### Attitudes towards extending Fellowship to 2 years

"Did you feel 1 year of fellowship training was sufficient to start practice?" Yes - 93% No - 7%

"If hand surgery was a 2 year fellowship, would you still apply?" Yes - 60% No - 40%

"Did you pursue additional training after 1 year hand fellowship?" (n)

Trauma (1) Plastic Surgery (4) Sports (1)  
Shoulder/Elbow (4) Microsurgery (5)

12 % pursued further fellowships

### Summary

Majority of graduates feel current training is adequate

There are notable deficiencies in subspecialty training opportunities within current fellowships

There are marked differences in perceived personal competence with subspecialty procedures, between trainees from different backgrounds

12% of graduates pursued a further year or more of training

60% of graduates would have applied to 2 year fellowship programs