



Earlier Introduction to Job Applications for UK Medical Students

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As fourth year medical students at a London medical school, we have welcomed the new changes to our MBBS curriculum whereby traditional pre-clinical medical students are now being exposed to clinical medicine earlier on. Although we do not directly benefit from this, we feel that an earlier introduction to clinics would have been more beneficial as our first clinical year would have been more productive having already adjusted to clinical medicine.

With this new curriculum in mind and its advantages combined with personal experience of being the next cohort of medical students applying for our first jobs, we feel inadequately prepared for the foundation programme applications. We felt that an earlier introduction to this application process in the UK and a better understanding of the Educational Performance Measure (EPM) would potentially aid us in attaining higher scores which in-turn determines our first jobs.

EPM is a complex concoction of different elements which are difficult to understand and considered a lower priority

by a number of younger medical students. We have found that students that come from a medical background, either through their parents or older siblings, are more likely to understand the points system and obtain points for things like publications and intercalated degrees earlier than their colleagues from a non-medical background due to the guidance or co-authorisation from their familial connections[1].

Early introduction to EPM would benefit these less privileged medical students as the pre-clinical years of medicine provides plenty of opportunities for publications and poster presentations as well as the most powerful commodity-time. However, these opportunities are often missed as students are simply not aware of either the benefits of publication or how to obtain them [2].

One suggestion on how to achieve this is with the introduction of a lecture-based series on EPM, which could be completed as part of e-learning modules that many universities now offer. It is a simple and inexpensive way to address the problem we have identified.

In summary, a more transparent system with regards to EPM and foundation programme applications will even the playing field and theoretically improve the quality of medical student portfolios and medical education thus increasing the competition for the most sought after jobs as well as allowing these jobs to be accessible regardless of pre-medical school background, all of which can be achieved with a simple lecture series that could be completed online.

References

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