

# Leadership in the medical school curriculum: a view from medical students

Sir,

We read with great interest the article by Kazzazi et al (vol 79(1), 2018, p. 44; <https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2018.79.1.44>) in which the authors discuss the important need for medical schools to integrate leadership as a core principle. As London medical students witnessing the changes of the modern NHS, we hope to share further insight into this pertinent issue. We agree that there is a need for students to develop non-medical competencies to lead health-care transformation. Among fellow students, we have witnessed an increasing move towards finding leadership opportunities. However, despite the General Medical Council's (2012) acknowledgment of leadership as a key competency, many students remain unaware of the option of leadership roles within medicine.

Although we understand that medical schools may have little room to incorporate leadership as yet another facet into their already stretched curricula, we believe that it is still imperative to expose students to the leadership field in order to attract those suited to the role. Furthermore, these skills should be taught from the first year, allowing time for students to develop interests and

consider subsequent opportunities such as a leadership intercalation programme, as with any other medical field.

Medical schools should be urged initially to offer opportunities such as medical leadership placements to those interested, enabling exposure through a formal setting. With time, these can then be integrated into clinical practice, and be made available for all students. If this remains unfeasible, medical schools should guide students to external leadership opportunities as it is not uncommon for only those with established contacts to currently pursue this area.

It is crucial, however, that leadership skills should not be delivered predominantly through a didactic method of teaching. Although we agree that initial steps could involve focussed lecture series, engagement would be far greater with practical experience. Students should have a first-hand exposure through shadowing, much like clinical placements, to determine if they are suited to this relatively new field. Other methods include simulation settings as platforms for teaching, as well as giving students the option of engaging in leadership specific student selected component modules. These also allow

individualized feedback to help develop such skills.

We believe that the need for leadership as an essential part of the curriculum is being recognized, but there remains much room for its implementation into medical school curricula.

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General Medical Council. 2012. Leadership and management for all doctors. (accessed 27 June 2018) [https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Leadership\\_and\\_management\\_for\\_all\\_doctors\\_\\_\\_English\\_1015.pdf\\_48903400.pdf](https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Leadership_and_management_for_all_doctors___English_1015.pdf_48903400.pdf)

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