

Improving training in the documentation of informed consent: a medical student perspective

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Sir,

As final year medical students, we read the article by Henry et al (<https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2021.0372>) with interest, with its discussion of the benefits of departmental teaching of surgeons in improving compliance with adequate standards in consent and its documentation. We feel that to ensure improvements in the process of taking consent are sustainable, any teaching and assessment should also be extended to students.

At our medical school, we have received no standardised teaching on the practicalities of taking and documenting consent. The lack of formal training on consent often results in inconsistent levels of experience and confidence among students (Anderson et al, 2020). Students are left to learn from the examples of seniors, creating large disparities in skillset and allowing poor practice such as the use of medical jargon or abbreviations to be learned and repeated in future consultations.

Extending formal teaching on consent and its practicalities to medical students may foster better habits among juniors to ensure adequate standards are met and sustained. Including students in the consent process has been shown to improve their communication and confidence (Schleicher et al, 2018). Involving students may also help to ensure that consent is perceived as a decision-making process between the whole team and the patient, rather than just a form to be signed.

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