

How can junior doctors become more effective teachers?

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Dear editor

Peer-assisted learning (PAL) has progressively become omnipresent in medical education over the years and is widely considered as beneficial for both the tutors and tutees.¹ Involvement in PAL schemes as medical undergraduates acts as a platform in preparing junior doctors to become the next generation of leaders in medical education. Indeed, experience gained as an undergraduate PAL tutor can be carried forward into foundation years following graduation.

However, as junior doctors with an interest in medical education, we believe that there is a lack of formal teaching training within the UK undergraduate curriculum, despite the General Medical Council's expectation that Foundation Year 1 (1st year of training following graduation in the UK) doctors should be able to "teach their peers and medical and other health and social care students [...] using appropriate skills and methods".²

In order to become effective teachers, junior doctors should be familiar with basic adult-learning concepts and with the wide variety of teaching strategies that can be employed during structured teaching sessions, case presentations, and informal team discussions. A number of training courses are available to provide doctors with fundamentals of teaching, however, they tend to be very costly and out-of-reach. Integrating formal training of teaching skills into the undergraduate syllabus would ensure a seamless transition from student peer-tutor to junior doctor teacher for all new medical graduates, at entry of their foundation program. Furthermore, undergraduates with an improved knowledge of learning and teaching principles are more likely to become better learners throughout their postgraduate training.³ Such an initiative would also raise awareness of medical students that a significant aspect of their physician identity will involve teaching, and hence encourage them to develop an altruistic motivation to teach future generations of doctors.

Disclosure

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in this work.

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