

Proposed learning strategies of medical students in a clinical rotation in obstetrics and gynecology: a descriptive study

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Dear editor

We note with great interest the article by Deane and Murphy¹ exploring the learning drivers and strategies of medical students in a clinical rotation in obstetrics and gynecology. The article highlights key points about the motivation of medical students, and we strongly agree that extrinsic motivators, such as obtaining a good ranking to stand a better chance when applying for future jobs, are key learning drivers. We lament the relative unimportance of intrinsic motivators and we commend the authors' suggestion of considering strategies to foster more intrinsic drivers of student learning. We believe, however, that this will be difficult to implement with the intense competition prevalent at every stage of a medical career, with students' motivations more likely to be of the extrinsic nature. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, aspirations relating to future careers are often volatile or, more commonly, uncertain. This creates an environment wherein intrinsic motivators may not be applicable, and so we would argue that medical educators should focus more on aiding students to find their given area of interest, allowing the intrinsic motivation to develop naturally.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

Reference

1. Deane R, Murphy D. Proposed learning strategies of medical students in a clinical rotation in obstetrics and gynecology: a descriptive study. *Adv Med Educ Pract*. 2016;7:489–496.

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Authors' reply

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Dear editor

We are very grateful to Prasad et al for their interest in our paper "Proposed learning strategies of medical students in a clinical rotation in obstetrics and gynecology: a descriptive study".¹ They raise two points. First, we agree that extrinsic motivation is and will continue to be a strong driver of learning among medical students for a number of reasons, including the competitive nature of career progression in medicine. Our

approach in this study was not to make extrinsic motivation redundant but rather foster more intrinsic motivators alongside extrinsic motivators. We believe this approach is correct and further exploration of the role of intrinsic motivation alongside extrinsic motivation is required. Second, we agree that the career aspirations of medical students can fluctuate significantly throughout their undergraduate training. However, we do not believe that this conflicts with the concept of fostering intrinsic motivation through students defining the relevance of their learning in their future careers. In fact, we found that this exercise actually assisted students in developing their thoughts in relation to future career paths.

Disclosure

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