

Mentoring foundation year 2 doctors through anaesthetic speciality training applications: a pilot study

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Introduction

Application to anaesthetics speciality training in the National Health Service (NHS) is co-ordinated by the West Midlands Deanery. Information about deaneries is available from their websites, with some, such as The London Deanery, divided further into schools. This wealth of information can be overwhelming and difficult to access. There is little interaction between anaesthetic departments and foundation doctors unless they have undertaken a foundation year rotation in anaesthetics or Intensive Care. This creates a barrier for foundation doctors seeking information on how to apply for anaesthetics as a speciality. Mentoring programmes are acknowledged to be beneficial to all stages of medical training¹, with focus placed on early mentorship² but a lack of information on mentoring in anaesthesia³.

Objectives

This project aimed to remove some of these barriers by delivering a mentoring programme to Foundation Year Two doctors applying to anaesthetic speciality training, assess its success and potential for development on a bigger scale.

Methods

Foundation year 2 doctors applying for anaesthetic training in one hospital were recruited by a presentation at scheduled lunchtime teaching and a follow up email to all Foundation Year 2 doctors. Eight doctors replied. Four group sessions were run over four months with one anaesthetic trainee mentor covering the topics:

- 'What to do before applying'
- 'How to prepare a CV'
- 'Putting together a portfolio'
- 'Mock Interview'

Variable numbers of doctors attended each session due to work commitments. Six doctors returned feedback forms at the end of the programme. This took place between October 2012 and January 2013.

Results

All six doctors had completed a foundation rotation in anaesthetics or Intensive Care. 100% 'strongly agreed' that the sessions had been helpful to them and would recommend them to colleagues. 100% 'agreed' or 'strongly

agreed' that the sessions had provided them with new information. 50% were 'uncertain' as to whether they would have preferred one to one sessions, with 33.3% disagreeing with this statement.

Conclusions

This project demonstrates the value of group sessions in preparing foundation doctors for anaesthetic speciality applications. Despite previous foundation experience in anaesthesia or Intensive Care, all doctors found the experience extremely useful and would recommend it to others. The lack of enthusiasm for one-to-one sessions suggests a classic mentoring approach would be inappropriate, but that group mentoring should be considered on a wider scale to make anaesthetic application information more accessible.

Mentoring programmes are acknowledged to be beneficial at all stages of training and is becoming increasingly popular in anaesthesia. The programme encouraged applicants to reflect on their preparation for speciality training and provided insight into anaesthetics as a career. I found the project helped develop my own understanding of anaesthesia as a profession and gave me valuable experience of mentoring and guiding group sessions. Preparing and analysing the data in a manner appropriate for poster presentation facilitated my reflection and personal gain from the project, as well as highlighting potential roles for mentoring in anaesthesia. Attending the ASME Annual Scientific Meeting was incredibly stimulating and encouraged me to continue seeking out research opportunities within anaesthesia and medical education.

Acknowledgement

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References

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