

Society for Education in Anaesthesia UK Kumar Award

Applicant: Dr Francesca Mazzola

Project Title: Mentoring Foundation Year 2 doctors through anaesthetic speciality training applications: a pilot study

Presentation of a poster for the study of medical education (ASME) Annual Scientific Meeting

Project Description

This project aimed to deliver a mentoring programme to Foundation Year 2 doctors applying to anaesthetic specialty training, assess its success and potential for development on a bigger scale. Application to anaesthetics specialty training in the National Health Service (NHS) is coordinated 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 assess. 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 specialty.

I recruited eight foundation year 2 doctors interested in applying for anaesthetics and ran four group sessions 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' and 'Mock interview'. Six doctors returned feedback forms. This feedback showed that 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 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. This project demonstrates the value of group sessions in preparing foundation doctors for anaesthetic specialty applications. 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 more accessible. Mentoring programmes are acknowledged to be beneficial at all stages of training and are becoming increasingly popular in anaesthesia. The programme encouraged applicants to reflect on their preparation for specialty training and provided insight into anaesthetics as a career.

I found the project helped develop my understanding of anaesthesia as a profession and gave me valuable experience of mentoring and guiding group sessions. Preparing and analysing data in a manner appropriate for poster presentation facilitated by 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.