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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Wellbeing at medical school: feeling prepared

Nikki Nabavi *editorial scholar, The BMJ*

As we head towards the end of the summer break and into the start of the academic year, many of you will be preparing to start, or return to, medical school. With the ongoing pandemic, things aren't quite back to normal—and *BMJ Student* is here to help you feel as prepared as possible. Whether you are interpreting your own lateral flow tests (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1411) for routine testing or just hoping to understand sensitivity and specificity better for your exams, we've got you covered.

Medical students often share that they feel a little useless on the wards. To combat this, we have put together some articles with practical advice, such as how to learn best on a ward round (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1761) and avoid becoming the curtain-shutter-in-chief, and tips for making the most of your psychiatry placement (doi:10.1136/bmj.n133). During your mental health block, you will work with different members of the multidisciplinary team such as a mental health nurse (doi:10.1136/bmj.m2068) and encounter patients with a variety of different mental health conditions, such as dementia. Jenny Nguyen and colleagues describe the ward based management of behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1779).

While those of you in clinical years will be back on the wards, if you are at an earlier stage in your medical school career you may be participating in more virtual teaching—from online lectures through to society-led events. You can read reflections from students and junior doctors across the country who have run their own virtual near-peer teaching events (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1385), or learn how to run your own virtual medical conference (doi:10.1136/bmj.m4942).

On Sharp Scratch, our *BMJ Student* podcast, our regular panel of medical students and junior doctors are joined by expert guests to discuss all the things you need to know to be a good doctor, but medical school doesn't teach you. I often describe the podcast as mimicking the corridor conversations you may have with your course fellows, or advice you would get from your friends in the year above. On Sharp Scratch this year we have discussed a range of serious and silly topics, including fainting on the wards or the nightmares of NHS technology. You can read the panel's roundup of this season's episodes (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1612).

The Sharp Scratch panel also discussed some common (and often humorous) medical specialty stereotypes and myths that you may be familiar with: “the tall, strong orthopaedic surgeon from the medics rugby team,” the psychiatrist who is “as mad as their patients,” or the “bike obsessed, coffee drinking

anaesthetist.” Some of the UK's leading doctors reveal how much truth there is behind this historic professional banter between medical tribes, and how they came to choose their own specialties (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1396).

Laura Nunez-Mulder delves deeper into another Sharp Scratch topic; our relationship with sleep, and how it affects our wellbeing (<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/02/17/sleep-the-underhyped-secret-to-success-and-safety-in-medicine/>). Whether you're an early bird, night owl, or a power napper, find out how to optimise your sleep for night shifts (https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/suppl/2018/03/01/bmj.j5637.DC1/night_shift_sleep_v24_web.pdf) and what snacks you should eat along the way (doi:10.1136/bmj.l2143).

Over the past year many mainstream media headlines have been healthcare focused, but we have also had a fair share of our own news in the world of medical training and education. Final year medical students experienced problems with booking and sitting their situational judgement tests, and The UK Foundation Programme changed its point allocation system for students applying for foundation jobs from 2023. You can read the full stories and responses from medical students here (doi:10.1136/bmj.n253; doi:10.1136/bmj.m4837).

The BMJ is defined by its mission to work towards a healthier world for all, and we have long been committed to partnering with patients and the public. You can read about *The BMJ's* patient advisory panel roundup (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1773), and why “working with patients in collaboration ensures our content remains relevant and accurate to patients being treated.”

The BMJ has also scaled up its investigative journalism unit. Read more about the team's five year plan and *The BMJ's* history of “delivering its own scoops, including on pandemic drug Tamiflu, medical device regulation, the MMR vaccine, and infant formula milk.” (doi:10.1136/bmj.n1771)

My year with *The BMJ* is drawing to a close, and I will be returning to medical school this autumn. While I am looking forward to resuming clinical work, I will miss the great privilege of working with other medical students from across the world. If you too would like to get involved, get in touch with our new editorial scholar, Pat Lok, in whose capable hands I leave *BMJ Student*. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, or pitch your ideas to us directly at bmj.com/student.

Competing interests: NN is a medical student enrolled at the University of Manchester 2017-2023.