

Improving medical trainee recruitment: the south-west regional internal medical training recruitment event 2021

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Introduction

There are difficulties recruiting trainees into medical specialties and consultant physician posts are underfilled. Although the clinical casemix, teamwork and academic challenges are seen as attractive, many are deterred by the thought of being a medical registrar.¹ Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted training and education opportunities, with many medical students and junior doctors unsure of what each specialty entails.

The new 2019 IMT curriculum enables a more supported transition to the role of medical registrar and the opportunity to encounter a range of medical specialties.¹ The Royal Devon and Exeter (RD&E) associate college tutors (ACTs) wanted to inspire medical students and junior doctors to undertake IMT and organised the first south-west regional recruitment event for this purpose.

Materials and methods

Two ACTs organised the event with the help of their college tutor, postgraduate department, deanery and the RCP. It was held 6–8.30pm 4 November 2021 in the RD&E lecture theatre with the option of attending in-person or online via Microsoft Teams (advertised free of charge to south-west medical students and junior doctors). It was split into two parts with a range of speakers (open to questions): 'Why you should consider a career in medicine' and 'Practicalities of IMT'. Attendees completed a survey post-event.

Results and discussion

84 people attended, with the majority (86%) viewing online. 68 completed the survey; 47 foundation doctors, 11 trust grade doctors and 8 medical students.

There was an increase in those choosing to apply for IMT, from 54% before the event to 70.5% after attending the event; with a decrease of 4.5% in those who initially said they would not be applying for IMT and a decrease of 12% in those that were unsure (see Table 1).

Attendees were asked to score themselves on a scale of 1–5 (1=knowing nothing, 5=knowing everything) regarding their

Table 1. Results from post-event survey

	Yes	No	Maybe
Prior to attending, were you planning on undertaking IMT?	54% (n=37)	6% (n=4)	40% (n=27)
After attending, are you planning on undertaking IMT?	70.5% (n=48)	1.5% (n=1)	28% (n=19)

knowledge of IMT and the application process. The average score prior to attending was 2.8 and the average score after attending was 4, demonstrating an increase of 1.2 points.

Overall, these data show that this recruitment event helped to educate and attract potential trainees for IMT.

Conclusion

IMT can be perceived as a challenging undertaking to medical students and junior doctors, particularly the concept of being a medical registrar. This event provided an opportunity to encourage these groups to undertake IMT in the future by providing inspiring and relevant talks with the chance to question the speakers. Additionally, the hybrid format of being able to watch online or in-person allowed flexibility for both trainees and speakers to attend and ensured the location did not limit access. The online format was particularly important given the social distancing rules applied in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

It has been demonstrated that this IMT recruitment event has had a positive impact regarding future applications; most notably for those that were unsure about IMT prior to attending. It is important that medicine continues to recruit trainees to expand the national workforce numbers, and events like these may be invaluable to the recruitment process. ■

References

- 1 Butterworth R, Smallwood N, Harding S, Black D. Trends in recruitment into core medical training in the UK. *Clin Med* 2020;20:86–91
- 2 *An uncertain path; the future for juniors' careers*. www.bma.org.uk/news-and-opinion/an-uncertain-path-the-future-for-juniors-careers

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