
Tips for JMOs to involve medical students in the clinical environment



A set of suggestions for engaging medical students in the clinical environment as a junior medical officer

Involving medical students in the clinical environment requires a team approach, patience, and planning; however, with the right support students can contribute meaningfully to your workload as a junior doctor and to the care of your patients. Engaging students makes them feel appreciated and helps them to gain skills required to be an effective junior doctor in the future. As the junior doctor, you are responsible for the patient care and management; therefore, anything undertaken by medical students needs to be under your direct supervision.

The following activities can be beneficial for medical students learning. If students are involved consistently and provided with appropriate feedback, it can be rewarding and helpful for both parties. Remember, students will be at varying skill levels and have different interests. It is important for their learning to be consistent and encouraging.

On the wards

WARD ROUNDS

- Teach students how to write an effective medical note:
 - SOAP: subjective, objective, assessment, plan.
 - Issues list, examination, plan.
- Do a paper round before the ward round – this teaches students preparatory skills for a ward round.
 - Have the student write a two-line summary of the case on a handover sheet.
- On the round, ask the student to write the notes while you dictate.
- Allocate a few patients that the student will be responsible for presenting in the ward round.
- Always remember to read what is written including the plan and co-sign (you are responsible for what is written).

WARD JOBS

- Following the ward round, identify jobs that need to be done that day.
- Make a list and allocate appropriate tasks to the student.
- Tasks students are usually keen to do include changing IVCs, bloods, blood cultures, IDCs, ABGs.
- Engage nursing staff in finding clinical jobs for the student to do

DISCHARGE SUMMARIES

- Allocate the student a few patients who will be ready for discharge in the next few days.
- Ask the student to do the following for each patient on paper:
 - Summary of management – what has happened to this patient during admission.
 - Issues list – what management was for each issue.
 - Operation summary including relevant complications.
 - Medication changes – discuss why they were relevant for the patient.
 - Plan for discharge – short term and long term.
- Review the electronic discharge summary together and use the student's notes to write your discharge summary.
- Once completed, ask the student to give the patient the discharge summary and follow up instructions under your supervision.

Consulting other teams

CONSULTATION NOTE

- Ask the student to write a summary of the case on paper including:
 - Background of the case
 - Current issues list
 - Current management
 - What is the clinical question for the consulting team?
- Review what the student has written together and write a formal consultation note in the patient's notes for the consulting team.

PHONE CONSULTATIONS

- Phone the consulting registrar yourself and ask would they be willing to hear the consultation from the medical student on the team. Don't be discouraged if they say no! (They are probably busy).
- Do this via speaker phone, so you can be ready to jump in when needed.
- Listen to the advice given – you are responsible for knowing the plan.
- Encourage students to go outside their comfort zone and do this as it is an important interpersonal skill.

Tips for when you are busy

- Allocate the student to do a long case on a newly admitted patient and present the case to you later that day.
- Suggest the student attend theatre or outpatient clinic.
- Ask the student to do a search on aspects of management of a condition about which you are unclear and present this the following day.

Tips for feedback

- Provide timely feedback within the same day if possible.
- Use specific non-judgemental language.
- Ask the student how they felt they went before you provide feedback.
- Tell the student what was effective. Remember, students need to know what to keep doing.
- Focus on one constructive change for next time.
- Model the fact that we all make mistakes and medicine is about lifelong learning.

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