Do medical students and junior doctors value careers fairs?

20th November 2007

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Planned career events listed as integral and career conferences annual or bi-annual

Career management—an approach for medical schools, deaneries, royal colleges and trusts
Careers management

- Careers information – wealth of literature
- Taster sessions
- Trust and University events
- National BMJ Careers Fair
- Specialist career planning tools
- Careers planning sessions in Foundation programme

- Is a Careers Fair still needed and what do medical students and junior doctors wish to gain from attending one?
Study objectives

- To evaluate a careers fair for Birmingham university students and junior doctors held in June 2007

- Careers fair had 23 specialty stands and 3 workshops on
  - Specialty and Run Through Training (Postgraduate Dean)
  - Overview of the Foundation Programme (Foundation programme director for Birmingham North)
  - New Immigration Regulations (Associate Dean for overseas doctors)
Methods

- 12 item questionnaire was drawn up
  - Who attended
  - Whether the careers fair had met reasons for coming
  - Did they feel better informed about MMC
  - Value of specialty stands and which ones they visited
Methods

3 free text questions

- Three main reasons for coming to the Careers Fair
- How can the Careers Fair be improved for the future
- Suggestions on how the careers service can be improved
Methods

- All attendees were asked to complete questionnaire as they left the careers fair.
- Results were analysed using SPSS version 15.0 and NVivo qualitative software.
Results

- 90% (64/71) attendees were medical students
  - 31% (20/64) year 4
  - 69% (44/64) year 5

- 10% F1 doctors

- 92% from Birmingham
- 8% from Warwick
Career Fair met my expectations
Better informed about MMC
Attendance at runthrough and specialty training workshop
Attendance at Foundation programme workshop
Attendance at immigration workshop

![Graph showing attendance status by medical student year and foundation year 1.]

- **Yes**:
  - Medical student year 4: 5
  - Medical student year 5: 4

- **No**:
  - Medical student year 4: 10
  - Medical student year 5: 28
  - Foundation year 1: 1
Main reasons for coming to Careers Fair

Specialty information 44
General careers information 34
More application and MTAS information 27
Foundation programme information 19
MMC information 16
Concern about getting job 8
Immigration rules 4
GP information 3
Organisation of training 2
Academic posts information 1
Working abroad 1
Suggestions to improve future careers fairs

More specialty stands 9
More application & MTAS information 4
More time for questions 4
Advertising better 3
Good experience 3
Handouts 2
Longer duration 2
Fewer specialty stands 1
More seats 1
People turn up 1
Quicker registration 1
5th year students only 1
Comments

- How to gain a competitive edge in the specialty of your choice
- Some of the specialties didn’t have written information and it is hard to remember what everyone had said once you’ve left their stand
- More sessions
- Perhaps over whole weekend/Saturday because would be nice to have longer because so many people came
- Fewer stands in the rooms, very difficult to hear and talk to specialists as it was so noisy in the rooms
- Only so exclusive for 5th years who have finished but nos therefore more time
Suggestions to improve careers service

Specialty information comments 3
Medical school careers advice 2
More time for questions 2
Advertising better 1
General careers information 1
Mentoring 1
More application & MTAS information 1
People turn up 1
Thanks 1
Better publicity about the careers service at medical school if there is one

Earlier advice to 3rd year students

Make it known who I should contact for help with careers advice

Personalised mentoring with specialists in one’s chosen field

Access to specialist careers advisers
Discussion points

- 3 Medical Schools in WMD – minimum 3 careers fairs needed per annum
- Weekend or weekday
- Optimum number of stands
Summary

- Career Fairs are valued
- Seen as an opportunity to discuss specialty information
- Workshops an integral part
- Help to give clarify understanding at a time of change in Postgraduate medical training