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Welcome to the JASME e-Newsletter

JASME is a constantly evolving organisation, aiming to provide accessible and comprehensive information in the field of medical education and research. This is the first issue of our monthly e-Newsletter and we hope that you will find it interesting and helpful. If you would like to write for the newsletter, please send your ideas to jasmenewsletter@googlemail.com.

Hot stuff

Conferences & meeting

- BEME (Best Evidence Medical Education)
 - BEME Conference – The use of portfolios in the education of healthcare practitioners: an evidence-based approach
 - 14 to 15 May 2009
 - University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
 - <http://www.bemecollaboration.org/beme/pages/conference.html>
- AMEE (Association for Medical Education In Europe)
 - AMEE Conference
 - 29 August to 2 September 2009
 - Malaga, Spain
 - <http://www.amee.org/index.asp?lm=108>
- IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students' Association)
 - IFMSA 58th General Assembly
 - 3 to 9 March 2009
 - Hammamet, Tunisia
 - <http://www.tunisiamm09.org/>
- ASME (Association for the Study of Medical Education)
 - ASME Annual Scientific Meeting 2009 - Medical Education: in pursuit of excellence
 - 15 to 17 July 2009
 - The Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, UK
 - http://www.asme.org.uk/conf_courses/2009/asm.htm

Useful websites

- IFMSA (International Federation of Medical Students' Association)
 - <http://www.ifmsa.org/>
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
 - <http://www.mrc.ac.uk/index.htm>
- MedSin
 - <http://www.medsin.org/>
- Money 4 Medical Students
 - <http://www.money4medstudents.org>

Resources

- Understanding Medical Education
 - A booklet series published by ASME
 - http://www.asme.org.uk/pub_ume.htm
- Medical Education
 - <http://www.mededuc.com/>

Don't forget to keep an eye on...

- Foundation Programme website
 - <http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/home>
- JASME website & Facebook group <http://www.asme.org.uk/jasme/>
- ASME <http://www.asme.org.uk/index.html>

News in brief

Belford Hospital in Fort William is leading in innovative training for remote and rural areas



Belford is becoming the first hospital in Scotland to use an innovative scheme for the provision of medical training in remote and rural areas. A mobile clinical skills unit has been funded by NHS Education for Scotland and fitted

with a state-of-the-art equipment. The unit will provide training on a wide range of medical skills, using real-life scenarios. During the coming two years, the scheme will be piloted in remote and rural hospitals throughout Scotland including Wick, Oban, Stranraer, Orkney and Shetland.

STV News. 02 February 2009.

<http://news.stv.tv/scotland/73483-fort-william-hospital-pilots-medical-training-scheme/>

Revival of embryonic stem cell research in the United States and the implications for the United Kingdom

One of the most controversial issues on medical research, worldwide, is close to its revival in the United States. Embryonic stem cell research, which had been highly restricted by federal laws in the US, until now, is expected to be brought back to life. Excitement has been the main reaction of leading research institutes throughout the country,

with some of them talking about a "long-awaited scientific renaissance". Fears about the implications for the UK have been raised in a recent article in the *Sunday Times*. Retaining lead UK scientists in this field might become a problem in the coming years.

Wilson, R: Beware a Scottish stem cell brain drain, *Sunday Times*. February 01, 2009.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/science/article5626606.ece>

Ackerman, T: A rebirth in stem cell research. *Houston Chronicle*. February 02, 2009.

<http://www.chron.com disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/6241780.html>

Dr Paschalis Kapsomenakis,
FTSTA in cardiothoracic surgery,
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The geek's guide to writing a medical learning package

A medical computer assisted learning (CAL) package can be extremely beneficial to undergraduates and foundation doctors when written properly. With wonderful pictures and fantastic videos, it has the ability to grab readers' attention and hence generate interest on the featured topic, making it extremely efficient in educating the reader on basic materials.

The most difficult part of writing a good medical learning package is to find a topic in which you have burning interest. Once you have conquered this hurdle, the rest will just fall in place rather smoothly.

Firstly, you will need to find a supervisor who is an expert in the field that you are dealing with. It is always a good idea to have a "candidate supervisor" in mind and come up with a general outline of what you want to include in your learning package. Remember to keep the contents simple and concise. A good learning package should have sufficient details and materials to generate interest. Depending on how interested your readers get, they can then move on to do some reading from the medical textbooks to cover a deeper level of details.



Next, speak to your supervisor about your thoughts on writing the learning package and present your project outline. Be sure to allow a few minutes for your supervisor to recover from the shock of your raging enthusiasm. Once you get the nod from your supervisor, you're on the right track!

In the process of writing the package, try to use as many pictures and videos as you can. Apart from the fact that almost all medical students are intrinsically lazy when it comes to reading textbooks; pictures and videos can demonstrate key information in a clear manner, better than words can describe!

Good luck!

Vincent Wong,
4th year medical student,
University of Aberdeen

Interview with Ailsa Snaithe, 5th Year Medical Student, University of Aberdeen

Why did you choose a job in an academic foundation programme (AFP)?

I had a background in research prior to entering medicine. I chose AFP for two reasons a) I want a career with a variety of research and clinical work; academic medicine is a perfect balance for my interests and will be perfect for keeping up to date with developments in my chosen field whatever that may be b) EVERYONE needs to do research at some point so why not have protected time to do it!

How did you learn about the academic foundation programmes?

I noticed that North East Thames had a programme a couple of years ago so I spent a long period of time looking up "academic foundation programme" on Google every month or so in preparation for applying. The UKFPO website now has all the information in one place, which has saved me loads of internet time thankfully!

What advice would you give to medical students who want to pursue a career in academic medicine?

To get some experience in a research environment as soon as you can in medical school. Research is tough, time-consuming and frustrating at the best of times - best to find out you can hack it sooner rather than later. It's no time for rose-tinted spectacles!

Do you have any "CV tricks and tips" that can help medical students get a job in an academic foundation programme?

Different foundation schools look for different types of candidates - I think the majority want a mix of people with PhD, BMedSci and even those with little research experience but plenty of potential. If you're serious about getting a place, it does seem to be getting more competitive as each year goes by so I would suggest that the sooner you start getting some practical experience of research and some evidence of commitment to research (publications, audits etc) the better. My impression is that interviewers are looking for potential so don't be overwhelmed by others at interview who appear to have an amazing CV with PhDs etc (if they haven't continued doing research during their medical degree their commitment may be questioned). In terms of nailing interviews, you can certainly prepare by having stock answers to the obvious questions like "why academic medicine?", "how will you balance research and clinical commitments?", "where do you see yourself in 10 years time?" etc. Most foundation schools also conduct clinical interviews too so be prepared to answer questions such as how to manage an acutely unwell patient.

Do you think academic medicine is a difficult career choice for a woman?

Regardless of your chosen specialty, women (and men) have to balance their priorities whether it be the desire to have children, to travel, to do competitive sport or whatever. I can't think of any valid obstacles to a career in academic medicine for women. As with all other specialties, if you have a talent use it and pursue your chosen direction. If it doesn't work out then at least you tried. Academic medicine is unpredictable but the rewards of teaching, passing on knowledge and possibly making a difference to patient care through research are there for the taking.



Ailsa Snaithe, 5th Year Medical Student, University of Aberdeen