Developing effective leaders

In this study we developed a novel mentorship programme with newly qualified doctors, by matching them to Specialist Registrars at a District General Hospital. The aim was to increase their morale and support, and to simultaneously address their perceived barriers to a career in medicine. In the UK, data shows that applications to progress directly into specialty training have been falling for several years in a row. The figure has dropped from 71.3% in 2011, to 52% in 2015, with now more than half of graduates of the Foundation Programme opting for work other than further training, either in the form of casual ‘locum’ appointments, work abroad, or even a break away from medicine entirely. The results show that following regular mentorship, FY1 Doctors are more likely to decide on not just a career in medicine, but are far more likely to progress directly into specialist training. Although locum appointments remain a firm choice for graduates, those who had undecided career plans were able to make more informed decisions. Over 10% of those who received mentorship changed their decision not to progress directly to a career in medicine, and indeed 12% of respondents actively made the decision to apply for Core Medical Training, having previously being undecided.

It is clear that our novel initiative to provide a mentorship to newly qualified doctors at an early stage can dramatically and positively impact their perceptions of a career in medicine before ultimately turning away from further training. Our study demonstrates positive correlation between forming interpersonal relationships within the workplace and a better understanding of a life within medicine. Ultimately, and if for no other purpose, these relationships have provided an invaluable way to improve support for juniors within the workplace, which will increase morale and lead to a better and more productive level of care for patients.

Clinical leadership and large-scale change

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