

## The importance of doing research as a medical student

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Research is vital for the progress of modern medicine and has created an ever evolving medical world. New discoveries are being uncovered everyday which are influencing our medical practice. Carrying out small scale studies has become an integral part of the pre-clinical course in the medical schools in the UK. Degrees such as Biomedical Science (BMedSci) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) are increasingly becoming a component of many medical courses, even though they are still largely optional. It is a popular option amongst students as it allows them to carry out an in depth study in their chosen field.

Doing research during the medical years means that that student will have to take some time out from their course, making the already long 5 year course, even longer. As it is extra time away from the course, it may be a financial burden, as it means extra fees to pay. It may also mean that they are detached from the medical course, which may require readjusting to when returning to the medical course. Despite these negatives, doing research still remains rewarding.

Carrying out a research, while still a medical student, provides an opportunity for them to study a discipline in which they are interested in. Research at an earlier stage, allows the student to think in a systematic way. Research also enables student early exposure to ethics, which is an integral part of medical research and practice.

Practicing medicine has now become evidence based. Therefore it is crucial that we understand papers that are published and also understand the impact factor of those papers. Carrying out research allows the student to critically analyse other studies and hence, judge whether the papers have any clinical relevance. Statistical analysis is a crucial part of doing research. It allows the student a chance to broaden their

medical statistical knowledge. Research also helps enhance the IT skills as it requires the student to use various statistical packages to analyse their results, carry out online literature searches, use Microsoft Word to write up their project and use Power point to present the study to various medical communities.

Research helps the student to develop characteristics such as self discipline, commitment and determination in order to get a result in a short span of time, and to write up the project. It gives the student a competitive edge over their fellow colleagues, while applying for jobs, especially for those who want to pursue an academic career. Not only does doing research look good in the CV, but it allows them opportunities to publish and present papers on their study. The research project helps develop life long skills that will be of assistance throughout a medical career such as time management, IT skills, and understanding of statistics, to name but a few.

The medical world is ever-evolving and it is essential, as a medical student, to keep up with these changes. By carrying a research work, we as medical students, can contribute and make a difference, however small it may be.

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