

Internship: in retrospect

Chaudhary D¹

¹Intern, Kathmandu Medical College, Sinamangal,

September 1, 2003 was the day, 8:00 a.m. was the time, and I was clad in snow white apron with a stethoscope round my neck and not to mention a new, immaculate identification card over the left upper pocket of my apron reading Dr. _____ chatting with a group of similar folks in the premises of my college hospital. I had mixed expressions on my face and others as well. This was my first day physical emergence as an internee in the department of Neuropsychiatry.

All through my medical student days, I had heard many mythologies about the internship period. I had seen my seniors working as an internee and now it was my turn to take a bite from the big apple.

I was passed on few comments: “starting your internship from psychiatry?” but it didn’t matter me much. The first day was over with re-introduction among the department members and re-orientation of the ward. From the next day onwards, each day seemed a harder one.

Starting a medical career from the awkwardness of touching a cadaver to examining and treating patients, I started feeling great of myself. I didn’t know why? On later dialogue with my other fresh internee, they too felt the same! It didn’t take much time for me to understand what an intern’s job is. From admitting patients-discharging-follow up was slowly becoming a routine job. Frankly speaking an intern’s job ranged from maximum negativity to maximum positivism.

“Internship is the learning phase” is what I had been hearing for the past four and half years. So I had planned to learn whatever I could, in one or the other way. Postings in the ward were the most hectic but a fun too! Working in the ICU was what I liked the most. Dealing with cases of arrhythmias was adventurous. During student days, the chapters in arrhythmias were in no way clear to me. No wonder ICU patients and monitors taught me a lot about arrhythmias. In the long run those incompletely read textbooks during student days became near complete.

There are certain things that are understood with great simplicity only during the internship and there’s no bluffing regarding it!

As the name implies compulsory rotatory internship, every time I rotated, I had to manipulate myself accordingly. Few departments were really fussy about the interns and I do even accept that few were a jolly ride too! I still remember the delight in doing the first night duty as an intern. Amazingly, I slept the whole night reluctantly. Internship what I really feel is “when you are there: you are always learning, if not: next time babe!”

One thing I liked about internship was, when you start feeling “I had enough of this department, its time for the compulsory rotation!” Every time I rotated, I got allured and felt like specializing in that department and I wasn’t the only one. I had my major crush with Department of Medicine, but gradually as time passed, I learnt to compromise myself as “future is whimsical” was what I thought.

Amongst good things I learnt, one of them was the recurrent partying with the doctors even on a trivial occasion. Creating a good rapport with seniors was what I was learning! It’s so tough getting on the same wavelength with the mega seniors.

The commencement of every English month was the most anticipated moment among the internee as it was the time to collect the four figure stipend. Though a smaller amount, it would crack any of our acute financial crises.

Another thing that created a huge pandemonium among the internee was whether to sit for USMLE, PLAB or home sweet home. Thinking of it, I was able to become a bibliophile and so were the other internee. For myself I could by no means be a monomaniac.

Correspondence

Dr. Dipendra Chaudhary
KMCTH, Sinamangal, Kathmandu

I was filled with nebulous ideas. But still sometimes during the daytime siesta in the duty room I would think “I’m better off with my wonderful dreams that would never materialize, then someone who is afraid to dream!”

Now towards the waning phase of my internship a new dilemma has topped the chart: whether to do house job or sit jobless-studying is yet a question. Everything seems so muddled up that, I’m left in sticky situation.

Retrospectively, throughout my internship I learnt to work hard, both generously and under constant pressure and not to mention to some extent I learnt to work and study simultaneously harder, harder than before. One thing is for certain; a young, brand new, taciturn intern would definitely turn out to be an old, garrulous, versatile doctor and for that lackadaisical manner should be avoided. I would now better put a tourniquet on my verbal hemorrhage; the resident is waiting for me with ten discharges to be done stat!