

'INTRODUCTION TO PAEDIATRICS' COURSE – USE OF SIMULATION TO INTRODUCE FOUNDATION DOCTORS TO PAEDIATRICS AS A NOVEL SPECIALTY

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Background: Post-graduate doctors typically apply for speciality training during, or soon after, the Foundation Two Year, however many have very limited exposure to Paediatrics. This was compounded during the COVID-19 pandemic, as access to taster days was significantly reduced. Previously, simulation-based taster days in Undergraduate Medicine [1] and Anaesthetics [2] have been shown to be valuable. We therefore provided an 'Introduction to Paediatrics' course aimed at doctors with an interest in pursuing a career in Paediatrics. The aims of the course were to: experience a range of common Paediatric presentations and procedural skills, learn about applying for Paediatrics, and learn about a career in Paediatrics.

Methods: Learners attended a one-day face-to-face programme held in our Learning and Resource centre, including a simulation suite. Learners were exposed to four scenarios designed to cover a wide range of common Paediatric scenarios. These included: bronchiolitis in an ex-preterm baby; bilious vomiting in a neonate; febrile seizures; and diagnosis of diabetes in a teenager. The scenarios were designed to be challenging but accessible to doctors without previous experience of Paediatrics. An embedded faculty member in the role of a Paediatric registrar was available to provide support during the scenario if requested. Complementing these scenarios were two procedural skills stations (neonatal life support and umbilical venous catheterisation), and a series of short talks on a career in Paediatrics. The participants were asked to feedback via an online survey.

Results: Nine foundation doctors attended the pilot course. Only one of them had any formal postgraduate experience in Paediatrics, and all of them were considering applying to Paediatric training. All the participants stated that they would recommend the course to someone who was considering Paediatric training and that the day was useful in deciding whether to do Paediatrics training or not. Using a Likert scale, they rated all the scenarios and the procedural skills as 'Good' or 'Very good'. When asked to give a star rating out of 5, the mean was 4.9.

Conclusion: This course appears to be an effective way of providing foundation doctors with a 'taster' of Paediatrics. The participants enjoyed the course and would recommend it to others. Although not a substitute for clinical Paediatric experience, it provides another opportunity for interested foundation doctors to learn about a specialty. Based on the success of this course, we hope to deliver this course on a regular basis.

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ARE ONLINE MOCK INTERVIEWS AN EFFECTIVE METHOD OF PREPARING FOR MEDICAL SPECIALTY APPLICATIONS?

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Background: Medical specialty applications typically include a structured interview or series of interviews. Since 2021, due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews have been conducted online, using a range of platforms. This has necessitated changes to the format of some of the interviews and may require interviewees to develop a new skill set compared to what they require for traditional face-to-face interviews. Studies looking at the USA residency matching programme demonstrate that interviewees prefer face-to-face interviews and feel they are more likely to be able to present themselves to their satisfaction [1]. Online interviews have several intrinsic disadvantages: transmission of non-verbal cues are limited; the possibility of poor audio-visual coordination can disrupt the natural flow of conversation; and the combination of these issues can negatively impact application impression and interviewer rating [2]. With this in mind, we developed a programme of online mock interviews, aimed at foundation doctors and clinical fellows applying for CT/ST1 level training posts.

Methods: The programme was offered in January 2021, just before the core interview period. All foundation doctors and clinical fellows in the Trust were given the opportunity to sign up for an online mock interview. The interviews were conducted via Teams, followed the format specified by the relevant Royal College, and were conducted by consultants or registrars from that specialty. Following the interview, the interviewers gave feedback and advice on performance. Interviewees were invited to give feedback via an online survey.

Results: Thirty-two mock interviews were conducted, and twenty participants gave feedback. 100% of respondents stated they were 'Very likely' to recommend the mock interviews to a colleague; 100% felt the mock interview and feedback were 'Quite helpful' or 'Very helpful' in preparing for their interview.

Qualitative comments from interviewees included: that they valued the mock interview following the same format as the actual interview; that the feedback was beneficial; and that it was useful to have two interviewers. Suggestions for improvements included: allowing more time for feedback; and providing two mock interviews to allow interviewees to implement suggested changes.

Conclusion: Overall, this mock online interview programme was a valued and beneficial method for potential applicants to practise for their interviews. We hope to continue this programme in the future and will incorporate the above suggestions.

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