

Reflection: Professionalism and Leadership

Description

Across three general medicine rotations, I have had the privilege of working under Dr Dean Letchford. His style of leadership and professionalism has left a significant impression on me and shaped my understanding of what it means to lead effectively within a clinical team. On every ward round, Dr Letchford ensures that each member of the team, students, junior doctors, advanced trainees all feel heard and respected. He actively invites participation, even encouraging students like myself to contribute ideas and clinical reasoning in a safe environment.

Feelings

Initially, I felt apprehensive about speaking up during ward rounds, worried about being wrong or appearing inexperienced. However, Dr Letchford's approach to teaching of listening patiently and responding constructively, even when my answers were incorrect, helped me gain confidence. I felt genuinely valued and motivated to contribute more meaningfully to patient care.

Evaluation

This experience highlighted the power of inclusive and respectful leadership in medicine, qualities that I feel are often lost. By providing students with opportunities to undertake tasks like cannulation, history taking, and note recording, Dr Letchford demonstrated trust in my developing skills and gave me a sense of responsibility within the team. This not only strengthened my clinical skills and communication abilities but also showed me how small acts of trust and encouragement can cultivate growth and confidence in others.

Analysis

Leadership opportunities as a medical student are understandably limited. However, observing Dr Letchford's consistent professionalism, engagement and encouragement taught me that leadership is not just about your position within a team it is about creating an environment where everyone feels safe to learn and contribute regardless of where they are in their medical development. Dr Letchford's has reinforced for me that good leaders uplift those around them through patience, clear communication, and genuine respect.

Conclusion

These rotations have been instrumental in modelling the type of leader and doctor I aspire to become, even if my chosen specialty is different to the path that Dr Letchford has taken. I hope to emulate Dr Letchford's professionalism, inclusivity, and respect for all team members throughout my career.

Action Plan

As a junior doctor, I will formally develop my leadership skills by completing a

recognised medical leadership short course within my first year such as the leadership course for young doctors offered by the University of Sydney. I will actively seek small leadership opportunities, such as coordinating team tasks or teaching medical students during each of my medical rotations. I will formulate goals for each rotation in my intern year in conjunction with my consultant and review my performance and development at the conclusion of every rotation.