Hiding in plain sight

The teaching potential of SAS doctors in the UK

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I do not have an affiliation (financial or otherwise) with a pharmaceutical, medical device or communications organization.

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The beaten track of UK medical training

- Consultant
- General Practitioner
Who are SAS doctors?

- Staff, Associate Specialist and Staff grade doctors
- Department of Health Charter 2014
- ‘Hidden heroes of the NHS’
- Diverse, 20K ??
- Under-researched
Aim and Method

- To explore, in depth, the untapped motivation and potential of SAS doctors as teachers, with a view to evolving new teaching roles supported by appropriate Faculty Development.

- A Narrative Inquiry approach was adopted to explore the participants’ life histories and specifically their experience of learning and teaching.
Participants

- 7F, 3M
- Age 34-65
- Six UK graduates
- Four OMGs (2 Germany, 1 India, 1 Sudan).

- Anaesthetics
- Medicine
- Orthogeriatrics
- Psychiatry
- Surgery
- Urology
Themes

- Early parental encouragement to value autonomy over external recognition
- Pivotal crisis forcing re-evaluation of career goals
- Valuing practical competence/'craftsmanship'
- Permissive organizational support
- Aversion to 'formal teaching'
- Struggle to make tacit knowledge explicit for learners
Parental influence

“when I was 4 years old, and I remember being at the top of a tree run and my dad being at the bottom saying ‘come on you’ve got to come down’ and I was like ‘I can’t do it, I can’t do it’ and I think I mentioned something about being a girl and he was like ‘right stop that right now there is nothing about your gender that stops you doing anything that you want to do and ..’ and that’s always really stuck in my mind actually.” P2
Parental influence

- “Mum and Dad are very supportive of decisions I make in general but have never ever given me the impression that I was selling myself short or any of that. I didn’t have any of that external pressure which is interesting because I know for a fact that if my husband had decided to make similar decisions his parents are just very, very different, like very keen on visible success if you like “ P10
Crisis and plan B

“I just thought if I spend the next 10 years completing my training, I think I can only look back and regret not spending more time with the kids when they were little. So that’s the decision I made. And I thought about it for a long, long time and the things I thought would be compromises are compromises, but I’ve never ever regretted doing it. I think it's been absolutely the right decision for me and for us as a family. “ P10
Craftsmanship

“it takes us about an hour to do a full work up of an older trauma patient ...these are co-morbid, frail elderly, you’ve got to chat to their relatives, you’ve got to think about TEP and DNACPR’s, you’ve got all the blood results and ECG’s, you’ve got to look at all their past medical history, you’ve got to work out fitness for surgery and liaise with anaesthetics, you’ve got to think about falls and fall prevention, you’ve got to think about bone health and osteoporosis and fracture prevention, you’ve got to think about rehab and discharge planning and you’ve got to get all that done before they go to theatre, and they are going into theatre now.” P3
Confident of practice but spooked by ‘teaching’

- “I feel I’m much more gifted in getting on and getting the job done and I’m not as gifted in stopping and reflecting and teaching, sort of stopping reflecting what I’m doing in teaching because I don’t feel I’ve….even though I’ve got the knowledge to pass the medical exams and membership and whatever, I probably get nervous when somebody says to me, ‘oh tell me about calcium homeostasis or osteomalacia’. I have known this and I do know this and I could refresh on this; I’m not sure I could teach you on it now but I could definitely teach you on it tomorrow.” P4
Summary - SAS doctors:

- a potentially rich vein of faculty
- offer more diverse role models for students
- may benefit from specific faculty development
  - building confidence
  - unpacking expertise
  - mentoring
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