

Publications beyond Research - Learning from Medical Students' Opinions and Viewpoints

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Students are important stakeholders in the medical community and hence, their feedbacks play an important role in improving medical education and furthering the profession at large. Inputs from the young, ignited minds can offer a different perspective and reveal new dimensions to the issues which plague the medical profession. Thus, it's imperative that the scientific community gives medical students an appropriate platform for the same. Medical journals of repute tend to have a low acceptance rate and students often feel discouraged by the critical remarks of the reviewers, which make them believe that their write-ups have no scope of getting published in quality journals while competing with articles of senior researchers. Sections which specifically solicit research submissions from medical students have given them some hope in this regard. All these submissions undergo a thorough peer review. If such manuscripts are accepted by other journals too, where the process is fine tuned according to the needs of undergraduate medical students, it would go a long way in helping them voice their opinions to other members of the medical fraternity. Quite a few medical journals also accept reviews of books, films and other media within the scope of the subject matter of the journal. Original poems and stories related to the medical experience, whether from the point of view of a health care worker or patients, or simply an observer, are also solicited by many medical journals. Following are few non-scientific avenues for medical students to commence their journey in the world of literature:

- **Students@NMJI** (National Medical Journal of India) [1]
Opinion articles, Experience as an undergraduate medical student, Interviews with eminent personalities, critical analyses of diseases in popular culture and letters to the editor. The manuscripts we received covered a wide array of topics, ranging from the importance of quizzes in improving medical education to substance use.
- **Student's Corner** (Journal of Postgraduate Medicine) [2]
Short narratives of real life experiences in the medical field during student life or residency with a clear informative, educative, or enlightening message.
- **Students' corner & Creative Space** (Indian Journal of Medical Ethics) [3]
Commentaries, discussions, reflections, short stories and poems by students of any discipline on topics on themes linked with the journal's core areas of interest - bioethics, healthcare ethics and humanities.
- **Experiences** (International Journal of Medical Students) [4]
Noteworthy experiences of Medical Students in the areas of academic, social outreach, student exchanges, research and others.

- **A Piece of My Mind** (Journal of American Medical Association) [5]
Personal vignettes (eg: exploring the dynamics of the patient-physician relationship) taken from wide-ranging experiences in medicine; occasional pieces express views and opinions on the myriad issues that affect the profession
- **Life** (British Medical Journal – BMJ Student) [6]
A feature that looks at a topical or controversial issue in studying or practising medicine from multiple angles and explains what students need to know, or explains how to make the most of a clinical placement or another part of medical school. Authors should interview and quote key people involved, such as first hand witnesses or experts from organisations linked to the topic. Life articles should have a practical takeaway where possible
- **Student’s Corner** (Journal of Medical Internet Research – Medical Education) [7]
Short essays and viewpoints by students and trainees in the health professions on all aspects of medical education, but in particular suggestions on how to improve medical education, and suggestions for new technologies, applications and approaches.
- **Speaking for myself** (National Medical Journal of India) [1]
A personal viewpoint on any aspect of healthcare in India. This provides a forum for airing individual views on different facets of debatable and topical subjects in healthcare
- **Opinion** (British Medical Journal – BMJ Student) [6]
Articles focusing on a single strong, novel, and well argued point. They are often topical, insightful, and attention grabbing. Make sure that what you write is fair and based on verifiable facts.
- **Looking Back** (Journal of Postgraduate Medicine) [2]
Historical account of a stream of medicine or an institution or department that has made significant contribution to medicine, medical education, medical research or bio-ethics.
- **The Arts and Medicine** (Journal of American Medical Association) [5]
Essays that demonstrate the relevance of the arts to the science and practice of medicine.

Another quite popular option for students is to opt for Medical Student Journals or MSJs. They are entirely student-led periodicals that publish student-authored articles. MSJs have characteristically been known to employ a student-friendly and feeble peer review process [8] and they also have a quick response time which attracts many student authors to send their articles to these journals for publication. However, their opaque peer-review process, lack of MEDLINE® indexing, absence of official journal impact factor data and low article visibility and exposure to the scientific community [9] are other factors which must be considered by the students while publishing their work in student-run publications. Magazines such as *InnoHEALTH* [10] and *The Checkup* [11] also offer students a platform to express their views on a myriad of topics in a more informal way.

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