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Do trainee doctors need to attend Medical Leadership School? A trainee led initiative in England developing leadership skills in doctors

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Background: Medical leadership has been highlighted as a core component of medical education after public inquiries into serious failings of healthcare at NHS hospital trusts in England were undertaken¹. Myths such as ‘born leaders’ and attitudes surrounding the nature and theory of leadership must be overturned in order to deliver healthcare in the 21st century. Incorporating leadership development in postgraduate curricula for clinicians at all levels in training is imperative.

Method: Trainee doctors established the Medical Leadership School in 2010 across the North West of England with the aim of encouraging trainees to learn about medical leadership. The North West postgraduate medical and dental team of Health Education England (HEE NW) funds and supports the Leadership Schools. HEE NW recognises the requirement of these skills within the postgraduate curriculum. The Leadership School committees have members from a wide spectrum of specialties and levels of training. A GP liaison officer role has helped the development of learning needs regarding leadership in primary care.

Results: Feedback from delegates attending the events shows support and recognition of the need for leadership development. The Leadership Schools organise evening lectures and workshops that have been facilitated by regional and national speakers from a variety of specialties. Themes discussed include shared leadership, change management, emotional intelligence, raising concerns and resilience in leadership. An annual conference offers trainees to exhibit their local projects, network and develop skills in leadership. Attendance is mostly good with some events over-subscribed; however trainee engagement poses a challenge. Committee members also access focused leadership development and support.

Conclusions: Trainees evidenced in feedback the educational value the Leadership Schools offer through events and networking opportunities. Learning outcomes for the committee include the need to organise the future committee and event calendar in advance and overcoming the challenges surrounding trainee engagement and attendance.

References:

1. The King’s Fund (2011). The Future of Leadership and Management in the NHS: No more heroes, Report from The King’s Fund Commission on Leadership and Management in the NHS. London: The King’s Fund.

