



The Story of a Third Year Medical Student

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Introduction

- Medical schools are responsible for the education of well-rounded physicians who are both knowledgeable and humane.
- Medical students face unique challenges especially when shifting from didactics to patient care.
- Declining empathy and idealism have been observed among third year students.^{1,2}
- Physician burnout begins as early as medical school and is associated with compromised patient care.³
- Student who are emotionally unprepared for challenging patient interactions may face “traumatic de-idealization.”²

- 1) Evaluate idealism and motivation for pursuing medicine among students completing their third year of medical school
- 2) Assess student challenges faced during the third year clerkships
- 3) Identify places for improvement in the basic science years of medical education to preserve qualities of humanistic practitioners

- Upon completing third year of medical school in 2016 and 2017, 27 UCI medical students completed an online survey addressing their motivation, idealism, and third year experience.
- Survey items were independently coded by two researchers and main themes were identified.
- Recommendations for curricular improvements were determined.

Question	Main Themes
Motivation for Becoming a Doctor at Start of Medical School	<p><u>Help people</u> “I want to help people and advocate for those who are most in need.”</p> <p><u>Intellectually satisfying and meaningful</u> “I liked being able to blend complex medical knowledge with patient interactions and teaching to ultimately help the patient live a healthier life.”</p>
Shifts in Motivation During 3rd Year	<p><u>More aware of financial concerns</u> “Financial stability is now more of a factor because I'm older, thinking about a family, and am burdened by heavy loans.”</p> <p><u>Focus shift toward work-life balance, priorities</u> “The volume of information and unreasonable expectations placed on medical students at this level of training has caused me to focus more intensely on my own well-being.”</p> <p>*No change (majority)</p>
Challenges Faced During 3rd Year	<p><u>Inadequate guidance</u> “It was difficult to change between residents and attending so often. It was hard to feel secure or get the mentorship that I desired.”</p> <p><u>Ambiguity in role of 3rd year student</u> “The attitude at the hospital makes the 3rd year feel that they are constantly in the way.”</p>
Additional Training that would have Aided in 3rd year	<p><u>Team dynamics</u> “Practicing the medical student's role in: -Family meetings -Surgeries -Shelf study tips (not just what books to use, but actual HOW TO) -Knowing when to ask questions - How to ask for letters and feedback.”</p> <p><u>Communication skills, presenting</u> “Knowing what a good presentation looks like on each service.”</p> <p><u>Time management</u> “A better understanding of balancing clinical duties with studying and personal life.”</p>

Conclusions

- Overall, UCI medical students seem to remain idealistic after completing third year clerkships.
- Clearly communicating the role of the third year medical student to resident and attending physicians as well as third year students would be beneficial.
- Adding training to improve team navigation skills such as group dynamics and conflict resolution to the medical curriculum should be considered.

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