

International Medical Graduate AKT Exam Support Fellowship

My fellowship was aimed at helping and support the large number of international graduates who choose to complete GP speciality training in the Wessex deanery. More specifically it sought to identify reversible factors that could help trainees pass the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) portion of the assessment process.

The fellowship was well structured with support from a senior mentor and from other GP programme directors. For a number of reasons I ended up having a range of mentors which actually turned out to be beneficial since it gave my project a number of different perspectives and allowed me to constantly iterate and refine the direction I wanted the project to go in. It also allowed me to increase my professional network of senior members within the deanery. Another advantage of the fellowship was that it allowed me to discuss ideas with the other fellows and find out about other projects.

I had monthly meetings with my mentor via Microsoft Teams that enabled me to discuss avenues of work and to constantly get feedback on what I had been working on. Completing the fellowship and producing a body of work at the outset seemed daunting but with help and support the project actually went much faster than I had initially anticipated.

I was able to develop skills in both quantitative and qualitative research throughout the fellowship. I was able to read and analyse primary care research publications and ultimately use this knowledge to design a 15 question survey. This survey covered biopsychosocial aspects of why candidates may struggle with a written exam driven by published research. This questionnaire was shared with GP trainees and I subsequently carried out focussed interviews with candidates who had failed the AKT exam on more than one occasion.

The output of my fellowship was an acronym to help candidates pass the AKT exam that can be summarised as PASSAKT. I have presented this work to all of the other fellows on the scheme and have also had several conversations with the RCGP exam lead for this work to be highlighted on the RCGP AKT website. I have also carried out two presentations of this work to GP trainers in the Wessex deanery to help them understand some of the factors can cause candidates to fail this exam and for them to put support mechanisms in place.

I thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunities that it gave me. I have gained confidence in appraising academic research work, summarising key findings, translating how UK wide research and can be adapted to work in the Wessex area. I also learnt how to write a question survey and how to carry out focussed interviews with candidates. In addition we had opportunities to attend small group teaching sessions and build a network with other trainees. Overall, the fellowship was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and opportunity to do some innovative work in a supportive environment.

