

Authors' reply

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Dear editor

We would like to thank Menon et al for the letter in response to our article.¹ We note that an overarching theme in the letter is the situation in countries where research at medical school could be improved. In the letter, Menon et al have brought out a couple of important issues: one is that the problem is multifactorial, and the other is the fact that opportunities and encouragement need to be provided to the students so that they could get more involved in research. Intercalated degrees are becoming more popular, and they are one of the

ways to improve the situation. They allow the medical students to dedicate an entire year or 2 to learn and participate in quality research. As mentioned by Menon et al, they have already been accepted in the UK medical education system. Here in Australia, various medical universities have adopted this system, and the medical students get an MD instead of an MBBS at the end. Furthermore, some are even encouraged to complete a PhD during the research break prior to continuing with the rest of the medical degree.

On the note of "brain drain", it is indeed a sad state in some underprivileged countries where potentially a lot of talent is wasted due to, mainly, lack of opportunities. Additionally, the priorities of most students from these regions are different, and many cannot afford to spend extra years in medical schools instead of earning for their families.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

Reference

1. Siddaiah-Subramanya M, Singh H, Tiang KW. Research during medical school: is it particularly difficult in developing countries compared to developed countries? *Adv Med Educ Pract.* 2017;8:771-776.

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