

An evidence-based approach to representation

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Research is an important part of a medical education and to be able to accurately interpret, contribute to and even publish research is something all medical students should be able to do.

Thus, it is a pleasure to be able to welcome you to the first edition of the Australian Medical Student Journal.

Medical students have made some significant discoveries over time, including heparin, insulin, Ether anesthesia and even the sinoatrial node. Furthermore, a significant proportion of medical students would like to have research as part of their future career. Thus it makes sense for medical students to have and run a journal to showcase their work.

Over the past number of years, AMSA has conducted the AMSA Medical Education Survey. This survey looks at what medical students think about medical education in Australia and what their future intentions are. Governments, non-government organisations, lobby groups, universities and researchers around the world have used

these data for various purposes and they are, of course, infinitely useful for AMSA itself.

In the current paradigms of science, politics, and education, being merely a representative body is no longer sufficient. Representation must be backed by robust evidence and thus AMSA must be the true authority on medical students if it is to be successful into the future. It is in this light that AMSA is pursuing a more evidence-based approach to medical student advocacy, something we like to call Evidence-Based AMSA.

As part of this initiative we are looking to collect qualitative as well as quantitative and anecdotal evidence to help further our advocacy and shed light on issues affecting medical students. Evidence-Based AMSA will be conducted in consultation with epidemiologists and education experts. It will allow us to better direct our arguments on issues affecting medical students, and subsequently enhance AMSA's influence over Governments, university institutions and non-government organisations.

AMSA will also be forming ties with one of the world's biggest pools of data on medical students - the Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand Medical Student Outcomes Database (MSOD). The MSOD collects a variety of data including where medical students come from, what rotations they do and their respective career intentions. The Medical Deans Longitudinal Tracking Project even follows these students beyond university



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to see where they actually end up practicing.

Linking the AMSA Medical Education Surveys with the MSOD and Longitudinal Tracking Project provides a more solid foundation upon which to base our conclusions and recommendations, and this partnership is one AMSA is extremely excited about.

Finally, to give students the opportunity to publish and be involved in the running of a journal such as this is a great initiative and I very much look forward to future editions of the Australian Medical Student Journal.

