

Attitudes of First Year Medical Students in Singapore Towards Older People and Willingness to Consider a Career in Geriatric Medicine

[Note: Reply from author in reference to the letter to the editor published in *Ann Acad Med Singapore* 2009; 38(No.3):286]

Dear Editor,

We would like to thank the author for taking an interest in our article.¹

We accept that, due to differences between the US and Singapore medical school system, first year medical students' career preference at the time of entering medical school may not be indicative of eventual career choice. However, many studies (including a study from the United Kingdom which has a similar medical school system model as Singapore) have shown that, while initial career choices may change after graduation, students' career intentions at the time of entering medical school proves to be a significant predictor of their eventual career choice.²⁻⁴

We agree that medical students' career choices will be influenced by role models. This was the main finding of a recent UK survey.⁵ We had uncovered further suggestive evidence for this in a recent study that showed that male students were much more likely than females to consider a career in geriatric medicine after attachment to our department, possibly because there was a large preponderance of male senior medical staff.⁶

Hopefully, our follow-up study in their final year of study will shed more light on important correlates of attitudes to the care of older people, and eventual career choice.

We look forward to the author's forthcoming article.

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