

# Should an iBSc in Management be compulsory for all UK medical students?

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## Dear editor

The UK medical school system has traditionally offered an intercalated science degree (iBSc) to supplement their regular medical degree. However, in recent times with an increasing focus on leadership in the National Health Service (NHS), there has been a shift. More medical schools now offer the option to study an iBSc in Management.

I have just spent a year completing an iBSc in Management at Imperial College Business School. Throughout the year I became more and more immersed in our intricate health care system, which is only really apparent to health care professionals whilst on the job. My question to the General Medical Council is – should an iBSc in Management be compulsory for all UK medical students?

Efficiency in a hospital is a big topic and there is a fine line in managing the trade-off between exceptional clinical health care and budget restraints. “The Nicholson Challenge”<sup>1</sup> originally set a target of £20 billion savings for the NHS by 2015 through efficiency measures. I am sure numerous health care professionals will know of the challenge, but many will be unaware of exactly what efficiency saving in a hospital entails.

By 2020/2021 a £30 billion funding gap<sup>2</sup> is expected to open up in the NHS, enough to bankrupt any private sector firm. Key reforms in productivity are desperately needed if this coveted health system is to remain free at point of use. Implementing these measures requires a clear vision ubiquitously present in a workforce.

A management degree is designed to expose the individual to the wider world of health care. A wider world in which business and clinical science come together to produce the end product: health. The World Health Organization defines health as a human right. Being a human right means that we should have access to “timely, acceptable, and affordable health care of appropriate quality”.<sup>3</sup> Given the way the NHS is heading, I think this basic human right could be violated if correct action is not taken.

I firmly believe a year studying management will produce a better-equipped workforce capable of delivering the reforms needed in the NHS.

## Disclosure

The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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