Achieving good medical practice:

Promoting Professionalism In Medical Students

Session developed by: Saad Khan and Lydia Hiddema

College of Medical and Dental Sciences
University of Birmingham, United Kingdom
What we aim to cover

- What is professionalism as part of the medical career?
- Guidance published on professionalism
- What is expected of you as a medical student?
- Scenarios covering key aspects of the guidance
- The importance of adopting professionalism early on as medical students
- Take home messages
What does professionalism mean to you?

* Adapted from the definition of the doctors in society: Medical Professionalism in a changing world. Royal College of Physicians 2005.
HCPs views on professionalism

Video 1

Neel Kothari: 3rd year medical student
Who sets the standards?

- GMC sets standards for medical students and doctors
- It details the steps that should be taken when professionalism standards are not met
- The guidance highlights what is expected of students inside and outside the medical school setting
- They have created a list of examples of unprofessional behaviour and also state the situations when fitness to practise proceedings ought to take place
Guidance- key points

• “Persistent inappropriate attitude or behaviour”
• “Failing to demonstrate good medical practice”
• “Drug or alcohol misuse”
• “Cheating or plagiarising”
• “Dishonesty or fraud, including dishonesty outside the professional role”
• “Aggressive, violent or threatening behaviour”
• “Any caution or conviction”
• “Health concerns and insight or management of these concerns”
What is expected of you?

- Medical students are preparing for a professional career
- Even in first year they are in a position of trust – at GP placements they will see and hear things that must stay confidential
- As students, we may even come across things one finds distressing – however, we must maintain professional attitude in front of the patient
- Acting inappropriately outside of medical school may be highlighted by the public – and may give the medical career a bad reputation
- If patients see medical students acting unprofessionally, they will lose trust in not just students, but also doctors and other HCPs
- Can disrupt doctor-patient relationships – lose trust, concordance and willingness to share problems
Scenario 1-Cheating

Is this student acting in line with the GMC standards of professionalism as set out in the guidance?

What would you do if you were in this situation?

What part of the GMC guidance is this relevant to? What does the GMC say about it?
Scenario 2—Concern about a friend

What would you do if you were in this situation?

What part of the GMC guidance is this relevant to? What does the GMC say about it?
Scenario 3–Health issue

Is this student acting in line with the GMC standards of professionalism as set out in the guidance?

What would you do if you were in this situation?

What part of the GMC guidance is this relevant to? What does the GMC say about it?
Scenario 4 - Confidentiality

Is this student acting in line with the GMC standards of professionalism as set out in the guidance?

What would you do if you were in this situation?

What part of the GMC guidance is this relevant to?
What does the GMC say about it?
Why do we need to maintain professionalism at all times?

- Medical students are in the public eye from day one.
- Degree demands students to act as responsible adults and avoid bringing the profession into ill repute - extends into personal life and outside of the clinical environment.
- When not in a medical student role we may still meet or be seen by patients or other HCPs.
- The way one acts now determines how one will act in the future – professionalism must become a way of life, not something someone turns on/off when working.
- Be cautious especially when it involves the use of social media.
- Discuss any issues or concerns you have with your medical school.
Key points covered in the session

Always think of how your actions will impact on your future career – would how you are behaving now be appropriate if you were a doctor?

When in doubt, refer to the GMC guidelines set for medical students.

Practise professionalism from day one so that it becomes second nature to you.
Thank you

Any Questions?