Melanin Medics provides support for African and Caribbean medical students, aspiring students and doctors.

Melanin Medics was developed as a supportive network for African and Caribbean aspiring medics. It began as a blog, and since its launch on 2017 it has grown from a single writer to 20 and has had 40,000 views in over 110 countries.

Melanin medics also offers:

- Mentoring programme
- Medical school application support
- Networking and educational events
- School outreach programme

What was the problem?
When applying to Medical School, Olamide Dada, the founder of Melanin Medics had struggled to find a platform that provided support and advice as a student of African and Caribbean descent. She noted that, in her medical school, only 10 out of 270 students came from African and Caribbean descent. Melanin Medics was set up as a platform to encourage, motivate and support young people of African and Caribbean descent to pursue a career and succeed in medicine.

Melanin Medics received feedback which showed a feeling of isolation amongst many African and Caribbean students, especially those in remote locations, or areas with less diverse demographics. Individuals cited a lack of direct support and lack of community within medical education for this group.

Research\(^1\) suggests that that a sense of isolation is a factor which contributes to slower progression and a lower attainment in exam outcomes for black and minority ethnic students and trainee doctors.

What are the aims of Melanin Medics?
Melanin Medics describe themselves as educating, encouraging and motivating young people of African and Caribbean descent to realise the greatness within themselves and aims to ensure that prospective medical students have the support they need in order to pursue a career in medicine.

They aim to provide a platform where medics can share their experiences and encourage one another ensuring they have the knowledge and support needed to further their careers in medicine and a strong sense of community.

What are the challenges
Melanin Medics is run by a small team and at present the network receives no funding other than donations. There is a continual challenge to raising awareness and funds to keep the network active and drive it forward.

By working with other organisations such the BMA, Medic Mind, Celutions UK, and African and Caribbean Societies at Universities around England, Melanin Medics aims to broaden the supporter

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\(^1\) Fair training pathways for all: understanding experiences of progression. July 2016 Dr Katherine Woolf, Dr Antonia Rich, Dr Rowena Viney, Ms Marcia Rigby, Dr Sarah Needleman, Dr Ann Griffin
base and expand their impact by reaching more African and Caribbean doctors, medical students, young people and allies around the country.

**What was the impact?**

Both doctors and medical students are encouraged to join the network to mentor, volunteer and support others as role models.

In 2019 there were 174 mentors and mentees across the UK. One mentee fed back that, *'Melanin Medics has been a great help to me as it’s provided me with a fantastic mentor who encourages me and gives me motivation when I feel like giving up’.*

Melanin Medics has provided application support to over 200 prospective applicants to medical schools. In 2019, 90% of prospective applicants assisted gained a Medical School offer.

The network has well attended networking and educational events, such as ‘Medical School and Beyond’, ‘Finding your Feet in the NHS’ and a doctor and dentist QA panel. These events build networks and improve visibility of African and Caribbean medics and role models.

Their school outreach programme has engaged with over 2000 potential medics of varying ages from primary to sixth form.

Feedback from one member of the network said:

*“Melanin Medics is a continuous source of inspiration. The positive representation of black medical professionals has an impact on so many, no matter what stage they are at. Melanin Medics has given me the opportunity to network with other doctors, inspire Medical Students through speaking at events and also impact the next generation of African Caribbean medics through outreach. I know how much I needed this platform when growing up and now I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to give back.”* 

A copy of the organisation’s full impact report can be read here: [https://issuu.com/melaninmedics/docs/mm_impact_report_2019](https://issuu.com/melaninmedics/docs/mm_impact_report_2019)

**Want to know more? Visit the website** [www.melaninmedics.com](http://www.melaninmedics.com) **or email:** melaninmedics@gmail.com