

Rantimi Atijosan and Matt Kehoe advise on dealing with MMC disappointment



Hope in the midst of mayhem

New things about MTAS and MMC are being written every week. So, instead, I will start by repeating myself¹ – whether or not you now have an ST number, God is still in control. That said, it is difficult to know how to respond to all that has happened over the last few months with MTAS and MMC. While we all hoped that some long lasting solution would by now be in sight, this does not seem to be the case.

Round two and beyond

Round two runs until the end of October. The government will then release 1000 more training jobs: to be eligible for these, you must have been interviewed in round two but *not* appointed. Next year's application process is now being looked at by the Department of Health and a number of key representative bodies. Professor Sir John Tooke is leading an independent inquiry into MMC, to which CMF has made a corporate submission. The MMC England Programme Board will be making recommendations on MMC from 2008 onwards. These interventions should take on board the problems encountered so far. But without post expansions, particularly of ST3 numbers, it seems inevitable that many talented doctors will still find themselves out of a training career in medicine.

Planning ahead

All those looking to apply into next year's process need to ensure that they are attaining competencies within the jobs they are doing for the specialties they hope to apply to. It is possible to create those opportunities: one of the F1s on my team is looking to do

ten-day 'mini-electives' in his specialty of choice.

Do you have a Plan B? Now is the time to be talking to family, friends and seniors about realistic options in and out of medicine, in and out of the UK. Not all consultants are fully up to date with the situation, so it is important to seek out wise and informed advice. Educational supervisors, college tutors and deanery staff are good information sources. Don't give up easily on what you *think* you want to do but, on the other hand, don't be too inflexible.

Our response

CMF's Junior Doctors Committee (JDC) does not want to add to the masses of data being thrown at you. Instead we want to be a source of encouragement. As you know, we recently attempted by email to gauge MMC's effects on you. Using the information gathered, we hope to tailor our response further to meet the needs of all affected CMF juniors.

At our November conference, Hope in the Midst of Mayhem, we'll be seeking encouragement from Peter's first letter to another set of Christians under pressure, the early church.² One of the conference seminars will be specifically looking at MMC issues and ways in which we can respond, corporately and individually.

In the midst of big battles, individuals can get left by the wayside. So please, if you are in need of support and guidance, do get in touch with us.³ We are here for you.

Rantimi Atijosan is JDC MMC Rep and a specialist registrar in trauma and orthopaedics in Oxford

So far, I've made six major medical career decisions – three correct ones, two equivocal ones and one definite mistake! Proverbs 3:5,6 advises, 'lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight'. Seek a broad range of perspectives – I once paid too much heed to godly non-medics who didn't understand my circumstances. Romans 8:28 really is true: 'in all things God works for the good of those who love him'.

Andrew Fergusson

is CMF Head of Communications

CMF junior Matt Kehoe tells his story

Matt, how did you end up in New Zealand?

In 2005 after house jobs and a year as a CMF relay worker, I found that I couldn't get an F2 job. After a dozen applications and no interviews, I starting thinking about going to New Zealand. An agency found me an A&E job in Tauranga and, one telephone interview later, I was arranging work permits and flights.

And you've stayed ever since?

Yes. As soon as I was offered that first post, I had a feeling that I could be here for years – and I am! I am now a New Zealand resident, have a training rotation and will stay until I sense it's time to move on.

Advice for UK juniors dealing with MMC disaster?

All the major positive turns in my life have appeared after significant obstructions to my carefully laid plans! Great things are happening in CMF New Zealand. I'm meeting fellow Christians, Kiwi and Aussie medics. We've just had our first national conference in 20 years!

My parting shot

Remembering that God invariably has a better plan for you makes dealing with uncertainty much easier.

Matt Kehoe is an A&E doctor in Auckland, New Zealand

Is God nudging you towards CMF?

The Bible is full of closed doors and forced rethinks that led to great opportunities for God's kingdom. If you've ever wished you had time to work for CMF, why not get in touch to explore some options? We have opportunities with student support or office-based ministry, as staffworkers or interns. Contact Mark Pickering, our head of student ministries (mark.pickering@cmf.org.uk) if you're interested.

references

1. Atijosan R. Modernising Medical Careers. *Triple Helix* 2007; Spring/Summer:12-13
2. www.cmf.org.uk/events/?context=discipline&id=2
3. Contact the JDC via CMF's website, www.cmf.org.uk