
Medical training or medical education: which do we need?

The United Kingdom is recognised internationally for the quality of its doctors. However, it can take over 15 years between the time when an aspiring doctor starts at university and when they become a fully qualified consultant or General Practitioner. Presently, the National Health Service is faced with increasing health demands and a shortage of doctors in key specialties. Different stakeholders regard the production of doctors differently. The NHS requires a workforce fit for purpose and emphasise training. Universities, as part of their core values, emphasise education and believe that the needs of society will only be met through having an educated medical workforce. The General Medical Council recognises the need for ‘life-long learning’ but with its need to ensure patient safety emphasises professional values, clinical skills and competency acquired through training.

Training can be described as the process of learning the skills that you need for a particular job or activity. Education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university. Which is required to produce effective medical practitioners? Will an emphasis on one rather than the other be detrimental to good medical practice? In my talk, I will examine the needs of the different stakeholders in medical education and training in the UK and illustrate how at the University of Manchester, through our medical curriculum, we attempt to meet this challenge.