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HOW MEDICAL STUDENT PLACEMENTS AT A PSYCHIATRY HOSPITAL CAN BE UTILISED TO MAKE PSYCHIATRY A POPULAR CAREER CHOICE

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It is perceived that negative attitudes towards mental illness in undergraduate medical students can impact student's decision in choosing psychiatry as a medical career. Improvement in psychiatry placements for undergraduate medical students can result in changing student's attitude towards psychiatry as a career choice. We demonstrate how students' placements from various medical schools at a major psychiatric hospital contributed towards enhancing student's interest towards psychiatry. Medical students who had their placement over the last one year were contacted for an anonymised student perspective survey.

While majority of students did not have psychiatry as their potential career choice before they started their placements more than two third rated psychiatry as a potential career choice based on their experience from the placements. This encouraged us to improve the placement standards based on student's perspective. Students suggested that more use of medical training in psychiatry, improvement in teaching and placement standards and more psychiatry placements before specialised training can contribute towards making psychiatry as one of the popular career choices. Student's preferred interactive teaching sessions including case based discussions and informal teaching sessions during ward rounds and clinics. Overall students found their placements helpful but more so to perform well in their examinations as compared to coverage of full psychiatry curriculum.

It is planned to conduct the survey again after necessary changes based on student's perspective to evaluate whether further improvement in placements can continue in contributing towards increasing medical recruitment in psychiatry.