

PRS Medical Student Corner: The Value of Collaboration and Mentorship in Plastic Surgery

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Sir,

“We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”—Sir Winston Churchill

At present, medical students' exposure to plastic surgery remains limited despite increasing interest in the field. Competitiveness for plastic surgery training programs continues to grow in parallel to the innovation and development the field has experienced over the past decade.¹ Beyond research and scarce clinical rotations, plastic surgery hopefuls have traditionally been limited in resources that can serve to fuel their interest and development as future surgeons. However, and with the advent of social media and growing online presence among plastic surgery journals, several novel resources have recently emerged.

Medical students are now one click away from “front-row teaching” by plastic surgery experts around the world. When used ethically and responsibly,² social media has been instrumental in bridging significant educational gaps in plastic surgery and forging countless avenues for mentorship, communication, and collaboration among trainees and surgeons alike.³ It is through Instagram that we were able to gain access into Dr. Rod Rohrich's operating theater, from whom we learned that “to be the best, we must train with the best.” As medical students who strive for the best, but for whom formal *training* in plastic surgery remains at a distance, we realized that we can start today by simply *learning* from the best, albeit through a smartphone screen. We are grateful to the *Journal* and its Editor-in-Chief for leading the charge in the present social media movement within plastic surgery, both through their notable online presence and, more recently, by launching the *PRS Medical Student Corner* (PRS-MS-C).

PRS-MS-C serves as an outlet where medical students can seek direction and advice regarding their goals and aspirations pertaining to a career in plastic surgery. What makes this platform unique is that the information shared is provided by not only established plastic surgeons and residents, but also fellow medical students themselves as they navigate their formidable journeys into residency. At a time where competitiveness continues to plague our schools and forge divides between those we consider our

professional colleagues, there exists a dire need for more open collaboration and deep-rooted support within our community. PRS-MS-C provides just that.

Inspired by the *PRS Resident Chronicles*, the first PRS-MS-C post by Alfonso and Savetsky⁴ presents a general approach for medical students to navigate their interest in plastic surgery from the very first day. The authors urge medical students to begin by developing zealous study habits before seeking research and shadowing opportunities in plastic surgery. They emphasize the importance of attending Grand Rounds and seeking mentors from very early on. They remind clerks to remain dedicated and enjoy every clinical rotation while it lasts, with the goal of first becoming astute physicians before plastic surgeons. They direct senior students to an archive of previous *PRS Resident Chronicles* posts about the residency match process, and promise future entries detailing the value of mentorship in plastic surgery, and ways to best seek research opportunities and excel in surgical rotations.⁴

The value of mentorship has been a subject of various studies and is well established for both mentees and mentors alike.⁵ By launching PRS-MS-C, the *Journal* is providing medical students with the opportunity to reap the benefits from both ends. We thank the *Journal* for introducing this esteemed initiative and look forward to both learning from and helping our colleagues, as we collaborate toward our collective goal of becoming plastic surgeons.

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DISCLOSURE

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