

MEDICAL EDUCATION: PART II

Medical Student Perspective: Why More Medical Students Should Attend the SGIM Annual Meeting

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I am a third-year student at Harvard Medical School and had the privilege of attending the 2016 SGIM Annual Meeting “Generalists Engaged in Population Health.” After leaving the conference inspired, and after meeting only one other medical student at the conference, I feel compelled to encourage more medical students to attend next year. The Annual Meeting was not even on my radar until my mentor encouraged me to attend; I submitted my research, and to my surprise was selected to give an oral presentation and nominated for a national award. Mentors, please encourage your students to attend like mine did! Presenting my work was an incredible honor and opportunity, and I learned more than I had anticipated at the conference.

Here is a list of my top six reasons why medical students should attend #SGIM17:

1. *You don't have to be a doctor to have an impact.*
There are many ways for medical students to contribute at the SGIM Annual Meeting, and physicians want to hear what you have to say. Start research or a clinical vignette now in preparation for next year. Medical students certainly have a lot to learn about medicine, but they also have a unique perspective on patient care to contribute at these meetings.
2. *Mentors want to mentor.*
The importance of mentorship in shaping careers is a theme we often hear in medical school and a theme that continued at all SGIM meetings. There are many accomplished physicians at the SGIM Annual Meeting who benefited from mentors in the
3. *You can have a work family.*
When I asked physicians what brought them to SGIM Annual Meeting, many responded that they come year after year to see colleagues from all over the country. To me, the SGIM community looks less like colleagues and more like family—laughter, hugs, and excellent dinner conversation abounds. SGIM members are people with common interests looking to push boundaries and be better together. Medical students should join the conversation—join SGIM, and be welcomed into the family.
4. *You can build your skills.*
Very practically, SGIM offers medical students opportunities to build skills that you are not taught in medical school. Giving a good presentation takes practice; the more opportunities you have, the better you will become. As a result of giving an oral presentation last year, I now have a better appreciation for how to respond to audience questions. Some of the workshops last year included information on how to lean in, how to expand your career into patient-centered outcomes research, how to be a successful leader, advice on research design, how to publish a clinical vignette, and how to prepare for a career in academic internal medicine.
5. *People are likely working on what you are interested in.*
On average it takes three years for research to be published, so excellent research related to your interests might be completed without you knowing it. Last year at SGIM, I met fellow researchers working in the same field whose papers had not yet been published, and now, we have the opportunity to collaborate. Attending this large, national conference is an efficient, fun way to meet others who share your interests and to stay on top of the latest internal medicine news. I now follow colleagues on Twitter to continue to stay up-to-date.
6. *It is important to set aside time to reflect on what drives you.*
Everyone knows that medical school is hard, and after long hospital shifts or all-nighters of studying it is easy to forget to reflect on why you were drawn to medicine in the first place. The SGIM Annual Meeting offers ample time for self-reflection. I left the conference feeling motivated with many lists of goals: to tackle population health-related problems, to contact people about their research, to carry inspirational quotes with me (“If you’ve always succeeded, then you’ve failed” from Dr. Suzanne Fletcher was my favorite), to start possible initiatives at my medical school, to share lessons learned with classmates.

To me, the conference served as a refreshing reminder of why I chose this career ahead of me and of what a privilege it is to be in the profession I am in.