

Chapter 1

Introduction

The transition from medical school to being a practicing junior doctor is challenging. It requires knowledge and clinical skills but also the ability to efficiently function in the workplace and be a productive valuable member of the medical and non-medical teams. At the same time gaining essential clinical experience, passing postgraduate exams, under-taking research or audit and publishing become essential for career progression. One soon realises that being a doctor is not just a profession but a way of life.

Medical school training equips with medical knowledge and clinical skills that are essential in formulating a patient diagnosis as well as planning and administering appropriate medical treatment. However, the skills of thriving in the workplace and career progression may not be adequately taught. Such skills have then to be acquired by drawing on personal experiences, observing others, or through trial and error. This may sometimes require multiple trials and many errors.

This book presents some well known skills that can help you improve your day to day workplace performance, be efficient and productive, be an inherent part of the team, shine and impress. At the same time advice is given as to how to prepare for postgraduate exams, develop essential technical skills, apply for the next post, successfully participate in research and audit, publish, manage, lead, teach, and train. This generic guidance can be useful for those aspiring to become a generalist or subspecialty doctor, and may be of value in whichever part of the world you practice in.

The first three chapters of this book concentrate on organisation, communication, and professionalism, skills that form the central core of day to day clinical practise. The latter part of the book concentrates on skills required for those activities that supplement clinical work; skills of postgraduate learning and teaching, carrying out research and audit, presenting and publishing. Skills needed in applying for that sought after post and skills that may help you deal with situations when things have gone wrong, are then presented. The final chapter helps to remind that work life balance and taking care of yourself are paramount in Medicine, as in any other profession.

The skills given in this book originate from personal training experiences, from the wisdoms of my senior teachers and trainers, and from supervising and mentoring multiple junior doctors. Much of the material presented is common knowledge or has been previously described, and no claim is made in this book for its originality. Sources of presented material have been credited where possible, and apologies are given if any such source has been omitted. Not everyone will agree with the advice presented, and that is understandable and acceptable.

I hope these skills will be of great use in your professional life, and will guide you through successful medical careers.