

First Year Creative Prize for Effective Consulting

One of the key things we want first year students to experience in Effective Consulting (EC) is the chance to engage personally, and individually, with medical themes through creative work. An artistic approach allows them to focus on the individuality and humanity of a situation, and to deal with the emotional responses we often have to clinical encounters. This approach helps us learn about ourselves, our patients and colleagues, and can also be a form of self-care helping us to manage the personal and emotional challenges of medicine. All useful tools for students to learn at the start of their clinical careers.

In the COGConnect toolkit the final phase of a consultation is Integrating. Whilst this includes some very practical things, like note writing and ensuring continuity of care, it also incorporates the ability to process our emotional responses. Some individual clinical encounters with patients will affect us deeply, for a variety of reasons, and it is this we ask our students to explore in their assignment for EC.

Additionally, there are 5 Core values which we expect all Bristol Medical students to bring to each clinical encounter:

- Compassion
- Curiosity
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration

Creativity will most usually mean developing creative and novel solutions, but we broaden this to its fullest meaning to include the arts in medicine.

First year students are tasked with choosing a particular patient, clinical encounter (across primary and secondary care) which may be one they participated in or observed, or they may choose to focus on wellbeing in first year medical students. They then use this as a basis for developing a creative piece of work.

Student work is shortlisted and voted on by peers, tutors, and senior faculty staff members, with the overall winners being granted a financial prize each year. The shortlist and winners are available for viewing [here](#).

Each year some students choose to reflect on their primary care placements, such as this shortlisted piece "Sell by Date" by Milly Wong. Please do keep supporting our students to do this, and encourage them to consider this when something has been challenging or inspiring.

Dr Juliet Brown
Year 1 Co-Lead, and Effective Consulting Year 1 Lead



Sell By Date – Milly Wong

Throughout all of my clinical placements this year I have encountered many thought-provoking patients who have been extremely open about their medical problems and how this has affected them physically and mentally.

During a GP primary care placement, one patient said a phrase that really resonated with me. They described how their multiple health issues had led them to feel as if they had a 'sell-by date'. This phrase had a lasting impression on me due to the bluntness and almost objectification of the patient by themselves. It portrayed their frustrations in such a strong manner with so little words.

The thought of a 'sell-by date' led me immediately to think about food and different packaging. I finally decided that the style of packaging of meat at a butcher would best fit with the idea I was trying to portray. I used mixed-media for my piece to try and convey an almost realistic product. I chose to use felt to sew a pair of kidneys because these were the organs my patient's condition was affecting. The use of felt fabric helps to illustrate the fragility of the organs as it is soft to the touch and quite delicate. I placed the textile pieces on a polystyrene tray and wrapped them with cling film to emulate meat packaging.

I then hand-drew a label containing typical information found on food packaging but in relation to kidneys (e.g. Instead of 'keep refrigerated', I have written 'keep heated at 37°C', a human's normal internal body temperature) and of course, most importantly... a best-before date.

Making this physical piece allowed me to materialise the idea of the patient's objectification of their illness. This is almost metaphorical in the fact that I now have made an object of the illness that I feel was being objectified by the patient!

Throughout this process I have learnt that use of my artistic skills is a good and effective outlet for reflection and relaxation. It has allowed me to look at one small phrase and explore all the ideas surrounding it in correlation to my patient. This reflection time is important for a doctor – so may be something I implement more often.

I've really valued all my clinical placements so far as they give you the opportunity to experience situations where, although YOU may be uncomfortable, this helps to explore patient's concerns or ideas and allows you to learn how to handle complex consultations. This is true for the patient that led me to create this piece and it highlights how important patient-centred care is, and ways to manage negative feelings in a consultation.

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Short-listed for the annual EC Creative Prize