Formative Experiences of Emerging Physicians: Gauging the Impact of Events That Occur During Medical School
Beth B. Murinson, MD, PhD, MS, Brendan Klick, MS, Jennifer A. Haythornthwaite, PhD, Robert Shochet, MD, Rachel B. Levine, MD, MPH, and Scott M. Wright, MD


http://ovidsp.tx.ovid.com/sp-3.2.2/ovidweb.cgi?WebLinkFrameset=1&S=BMCNFDPFDPKDBILINCDLCMNOACAA00&returnUrl=http%3a%2f%2fovidsp.tx.ovid.com%2fsp-3.2.2%2fovidweb.cgi%3f%26Full%2bText%3dL%257c%257c0%257c%257c00001888-201008000-00018%26S%3dBMCNFDPFDPKDBILINCDLCMNOACAA00&directlink=http%3a%2f%2fgraphics.tx.ovid.com%2fovftpdfs%2fFPDDNMCDCDLIPK00%2ffs047%2fiovf%2flive%2fgy024%2f000001888%2f00001888-201008000-00018.pdf&filename=Formative+Experiences+of+Emerging+Physicians%3a+Gauging+the+Impact+of+Events+That+Occur+During+Medical+School.&pdf_key=FPDDNMCDCDLIPK00&pdf_index=/fs047/ovft/live/gy024/00001888/00001888-201008000-00018

Objectives
Emotional development, an important component of nascent professional competence, is likely to be shaped by specific formative experiences. The capacity of medical school faculty, housestaff, community physician mentors, and peer–student advisors to attend to the needs of nascent physicians will be determined in part by their capacity to anticipate, recognize, and even influence responses to emotionally meaningful experiences in medical school that might promote or hinder student’s professional growth. To this end, the authors studied graduating students at their medical school to characterize the extent to which a wide variety of emotionally evocative events shaped their experience of training.

Methods
A list of 34 items that represented distinctive formative experiences or described important relationships for medical students was developed by consulting the medical education literature and holding focus group meetings with faculty from the school’s Advisory Program. Additional questions about student’s experiences in medical school with respect to advising and career choice were added to this list of items to develop the final survey instrument. The survey was administered to 216 graduating medical students from two consecutive years (classes of 2007 and 2008) at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in a cohort study. Primary outcomes were exposure rates for the experiences and students’ ratings of impact for those that occurred.

Results
One hundred eighty-one students (84%) responded. All events were experienced by 25% of students. Two events were described by most as having tremendous impact: “finding an
exceptional role model” and “identifying a perfect area of medicine.” Other prevalent events with strong impact included “a special patient-care experience,” “working well with a team,” “seeing a patient whose life was saved,” “encountering a negative role model,” “seeing a patient die,” “seeing a patient experience severe pain,” and “a bad clinical experience.” Factor analysis revealed three event clusters: “inspiring experiences,” “mortality-related experiences,” and “negative experiences relating to the learning environment.”

Conclusions
Specific formative experiences have especially strong impacts on medical students. While the intrinsic value of such experiences should continue to drive educational design, increased awareness of the diversity and range of formative experiences will prepare educators to more effectively guide positive emotional development, enhancing personal and professional growth during medical school.

Implications for TUSM
This paper addresses the significant role that the learning environment plays in medical student’s training. For this reason, the LCME mandates that all medical schools evaluate the learning environment throughout medical student’s training. At TUSM, we have always been committed to establish a learning environment conducive to learning and professional growth. Furthermore, we are now joining an inter-institutional effort that brings together 12 schools from different regions of the country to evaluate the learning environment throughout medical school training. This paper invites us to reflect on the learning environment that we are providing to our students to ensure that it is supporting and cultivating our TUSM student’s emotional development and professional growth.