

msc Medical
Schools
Council
For the future of medicine

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By email

26 November 2024

Dear Ms Archer

Regulation 28 Response - Maeve Bernadette Boothby O' Neill

Thank you for sharing the Regulation 28 report of 7 October 2024 with the Medical Schools Council (MSC). I would like to start this response by expressing my deepest condolences to Maeve's family and friends on behalf of MSC. The circumstances of her death were deeply troubling, and I thank you for bringing them to our attention.

MSC is the membership body for medical schools in the UK and as such it has no power to compel medical schools to change curricula or require that content be delivered in a certain way. The General Medical Council (GMC) is the regulator of undergraduate medical education and is responsible for quality assuring medical schools. However, I have looked into how ME/CFS is taught and assessed across medical schools, and I have some information that I hope you will find reassuring.

The GMC has introduced a new national licensing exam for all students graduating in the 2024/2025 academic year. As part of this process, it had to define what conditions and presentations would be assessed in this exam so students could adequately prepare and medical schools could ensure that their teaching covered all relevant conditions. Chronic fatigue syndrome is specifically mentioned as a condition in the [Content Map](#) for this important assessment meaning medical schools will include it in their teaching.

I also asked medical schools to send me some examples of how they teach this important area, and I would like to share with you some of the responses;

We have a learning event in Year 1, in which students will learn about the clinical features, proposed pathophysiological mechanisms and biopsychosocial interventions for management for chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, fibromyalgia and post-covid syndrome. The students will build on this session in subsequent years. We think it is important to highlight the burden associated with these diseases and sequelae that can occur.

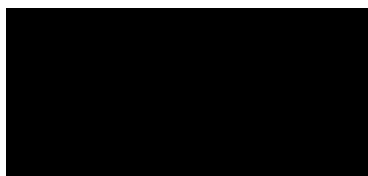
In our curriculum we do cover CFS and chronic widespread pain. We have teaching materials on it in the Y4 Musculoskeletal and in the GP block and we cover the important area of differential diagnosis for fatigue.

We try, as other medical schools do, to integrate experts by lived experience into our curriculum... we are fortunate to have the input of a patient living with chronic fatigue/ME

Additionally, the Department for Health and Social Care shared their response to this section 28 request with me and I can confirm that I have shared NHS England e-learning package on ME with medical schools.

I would like to finish by stressing that medical school is the first step of a long process of education and training that doctors in the UK undertake. It is important that lessons learnt in undergraduate medical education are built on when a doctor enters postgraduate medical education and training. MSC is not responsible for these stages of training which are regulated by the GMC. The curricula for specialty and GP training are developed by medical Royal Colleges who are also responsible for the assessment of specialist knowledge. In order that Royal Colleges and GMC are aware of this case I am copying in Professor [REDACTED], Director of Education and Standards at GMC and [REDACTED], Director of Education and Quality at the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.

Regards



[REDACTED]
Director

Medical Schools Council

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CC - Professor Colin Melville, Director of Education and Standards, GMC

Rose Jarvis, Director of Education and Quality, AoMRC