

To the Editor: In recent years, academic medicine has been placed under increasing pressure by international health service reforms, shortfalls in funding, and a lack of career stability. The explosion of molecular biology has compounded these problems, with large amounts of research funding now targeted towards basic science. In an attempt to help rectify this problem and bring together international partners and stakeholders, the BMJ Publishing Group launched a campaign to promote and revitalize academic medicine in November 2003. Since then, more than 40 international journals and organizations have joined the campaign (1), and the debate about the best strategies to revitalize academic medicine has begun.

Trainees have specific concerns about the future of academic medicine. Inadequate funding, the scarcity of post-doctoral posts, and the lack of a structured training program mean that career paths are often uncertain. These problems are not only confined to the developed world but exist to a greater or lesser extent across the globe. As a result, many talented doctors are put off pursuing an academic career.

Now is their opportunity to have a say. The trainees' advisory group (TAG) is one of a number of key groups that will report to the international working party of 20 members who are charged with answering four questions:

- What are the roles of academic medicine?
- How well is academic medicine carrying out these roles?
- Why is academic medicine failing to fulfill its roles?

For each failure, what ought to be done about it?

In the TAG all specialties within medicine and all regions across the international community should be

represented. Join us now by writing an e-mail to us. Please tell us your name, age, present specialty and grade, country of qualification, and country of work. Once we have collected responses from interested trainees we will form an interspecialty steering committee with global representation in order to internationalize the leadership of the TAG. We also intend to have a representative gender and race mix within the committee.

After the formation of the TAG committee, a detailed, structured questionnaire will be devised, and each committee member will liaise with individuals within their region and collate their responses to this. The results of the questionnaire will be presented to the international working party.

This is an exciting venture and we hope you will be able to join us.

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- 1 Clark J, Smith R. BMJ Publishing Group to launch an international campaign to promote academic medicine. *BMJ*. 2003;327:1001-2.