

- FOCUS
- SPOTLIGHT
- RECRUITMENT
- ANNOUNCEMENTS
- EVENTS

naturejobs

Time for a change

Tradition! That's the chorus and title for the opening song of *Fiddler on the Roof*, a musical set in a Jewish *shtetl* in 1905 Russia. The play refers to the difficulties that dairyman Tevye has with accepting change. But if a recent letter to the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* is to be believed, the play's themes also resonate with graduate medical education (K. M. Ludmerer and M. M. E. Johns *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* **294**, 1083–1087; 2005).

The letter says that graduate medical education has failed to live up to its potential partly because of a "traditional subordination of education to service". But this sentiment broadly applies to all scientific education. In medicine, it means medical residents end up working 24-hour-plus shifts with little educational support. For scientific graduate students and postdocs, it means periods of training when their progress is beholden to principal investigators, who sometimes prolong the process to get more publications out of the young scientists they are supposedly mentoring.

Both the *JAMA* letter and this week's *Recruiters & Academia* (see page 448), offer some alternatives to these

traditions. The *JAMA* item suggests limiting the number of hours residents spend with patients, relieving residents of non-educational tasks, improving the educational content of training, and providing a support system to ease emotional stress. The *Naturejobs* item proposes taking some emphasis off publication record and rewarding other aspects of scientific work.

These changes could make science and medicine more attractive as career options. And they could make the professional development for both MDs and PhDs more productive — especially if it means they are treated as trainees, rather than workhorses. Ideally, better science and medicine would result. In *Fiddler*, Tevye eventually accepts change. Perhaps the scientific and medical establishment should as well.



Paul Smaglik, *Naturejobs* editor

CONTACTS

Publisher: Ben Crowe
Editor: Paul Smaglik
Marketing Manager: David Bowen

US Head Office, New York
 345 Park Avenue South, 10th Floor,
 New York, NY 10010-1707
 Tel: +1 800 989 7718
 Fax: +1 800 989 7103
 e-mail: naturejobs@natureny.com

US Sales Manager/Corporations:
 Peter Bless
 Classified Sales Representatives
 Tel: +1 800 989 7718

**New York/Pennsylvania/
 Latin America:** Kelly Roman
**Midwest USA/Maryland/
 NIH:** Wade Tucker
East USA/Canada:
 Janine Taormina

**San Francisco Office
 Classified Sales Representative:**
 Michaela Bjorkman
 West USA/West Corp. Canada
 225 Bush Street, Suite 1453
 San Francisco, CA 94104
 Tel: +1 415 781 3803
 Fax: +1 415 781 3805
 e-mail: m.bjorkman@naturesf.com

European Head Office, London
 The Macmillan Building,
 4 Crinan Street,
 London N1 9XW, UK
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4961
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996
 e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

Naturejobs Sales Director: Nevin Bayoumi (4978)
European Sales Manager: Andy Douglas (4975)

Advertising Production Manager: Billie Franklin
 To send materials use London address above.
 Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4814
 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4814
 e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

Naturejobs web development: Tom Hancock
Naturejobs online production: Niamh Shields

European Satellite Office
 Patrick Phelan
 e-mail: p.phelan@nature.com

Japan Head Office, Tokyo
 Chiyoda Building,
 2-37 Ichigayatamachi,
 Shinjuku-ku,
 Tokyo 162-0843
 Tel: +81 3 3267 8751
 Fax: +81 3 3267 8746
Asia-Pacific Sales Director: Rinoko Asami
 e-mail: rasami@naturejpn.com