

naturejobs

**THE CAREERS
MAGAZINE FOR
SCIENTISTS**

Medical students rarely come into contact with the world of basic research. But they should, argues a recent report from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). It would help them to turn such studies into better patient care, the AAMC argues, and would help them in their professional life as doctors to play a more effective role in research. The report, *Promoting Translational and Clinical Science: The Critical Role of Medical Schools and Teaching Hospitals*, recommends ways in which medical schools could produce a greater number of translational and clinical physician-scientists.

The first step, says the AAMC, is for future doctors — both as students and residents — to learn about basic, clinical and translational research as part of their course. Second, training opportunities need to be adjusted to include advanced degree courses, allowing potential physician-scientists to undertake research and receive appropriate mentoring. And finally, the career system needs to be altered so that it encourages and rewards research. If young physician-scientists are unlikely to be recognized for their contributions to clinical research or published papers, they will have little incentive to embrace research — especially when many young doctors are under pressure to see more patients.

Although these recommendations are specific to physician-scientists, the problems likely to arise if they are implemented are relevant to the wider scientific community. The first step is possible as it simply means changes to curricula at individual institutions. The second is harder because it will need senior scientists from medicine and beyond to buy into the idea — it is difficult to mandate better mentoring. But the third point is daunting, because it requires changes that are greater than individual scientists or institutions can bring to bear.

In all cases, policy-makers need to ask themselves how committed they are to the changes. But young scientists-to-be can help: by gravitating towards the best programmes, and by pushing for reforms when training and rhetoric don't match.

Paul Smaglik, Naturejobs editor

CONTACTS

Publisher: Ben Crowe
Editor: Paul Smaglik
Assistant Editor: Gene Russo

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

European Sales Manager:
Andy Douglas (4975)
Natureevents: Matt Betteridge (4015)
UK/RoW/Ireland:
Nils Moeller (4953)
Scandinavia/Spain/Portugal:
Claudia Paulsen Young (4973)
France/Switzerland/Belgium/Italy:
Maria Ceraolo (4994)

Germany/Austria/The Netherlands:
Reya Silao (4970)
Business Development Manager:
Amelie Pequignot (4974)

Advertising Production Manager:
Stephen Russell
To send materials use London
address above.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4816
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996
e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com
Naturejobs web development:
Tom Hancock
Naturejobs online production:
Catherine Alexander

European Satellite Office
Germany: Patrick Phelan
Tel: +49 89 54 90 57 11
Fax: +49 89 54 90 57 20
e-mail: p.phelan@nature.com

US Head Office, New York
75 Varick Street,
9th Floor, New York,
NY 10013-1917
Tel: +1 800 989 7718
Fax: +1 800 989 7103
e-mail: naturejobs@natureny.com

US Sales Manager:
Peter Bless

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 Manager:
Ayako Watanabe
e-mail: a.watanabe@natureasia.com