

SMAC 2023 Student Reflections

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Before I begin, I would like to extend a special thanks to the families, faculty members and organisers in allowing us this time. Initially, when asked to give a speech to show my appreciation, I saw it as a good opportunity to show my gratitude towards the silent mentors. But as I thought about it more, I realised it meant more than that. A sacrifice implies a sense of loss, that if given the chance not to give something up, they wouldn't. Instead, what was given to us was not a sacrifice by the silent mentors, but a gift. Despite no personal benefit, they did not choose to give themselves up with hesitation but with an openness that I can only describe as a gift to us.

To highlight the impact of this gift, I would like to bring up the stories of our seniors. Not our M5, housemen or even consultant seniors but from a senior 2000 years ago. Herophilus, who is frequently called the father of anatomy, started his journey in Alexandria dissecting the bodies of executed prisoners. Through that, we learnt the fundamentals of today's anatomy such as the cause of a pulse and the location of organs. Following that, Vesalius would follow in Herophilus' footsteps more than a millennia later through his publications on detailed human anatomy. It was through the pioneering works of these men that our understanding of the human body is where it is today.

Like these 2 men, we have come to have a greater understanding of our human anatomy through our silent mentors. Their gift has allowed us an insight into what makes us human. Therefore, as we go along our medical school journey, it is imperative that we never see these men and women as just what they are; another heart or a series of muscles. Instead, we need to see them for who they are, a parent, a child, a neighbour, a friend; a person who has selflessly given themselves to others in the pursuit of understanding. To end with a quote of Herophilus "When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, strength cannot fight, intelligence cannot be applied, art cannot become manifest, wealth becomes useless" It was through the gift of our silent mentors that we begin our journey to bring this health back to those around us. Therefore, I thank all of you here today on behalf of these silent mentors.

