

Organisational Grit Trumps Individual Grit Response to: Grit in healthcare education and practice

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I read with great interest Samarasekera and Gwee's article in TAPS (January, 2020) entitled: "Grit in healthcare education practice". The authors cited Duckworth's seminal studies on grit and its strong correlation with success. The authors suggested that grit be used to select for medical students and for healthcare systems to adopt organisational grit. I applaud the authors' call for implementing organisational grit in healthcare. This is a step forward in working out the multiple issues plaguing healthcare. Interestingly, the call to implement organisational grit might not make it necessary to select for grit upon medical school admission.

Duckworth had posited that the mere assembly of gritty individuals might not necessarily create a gritty organisation (Duckworth, 2016). Students who test as gritty upon admission might be gritty in a different context than that of a medical school. Medical school has its own specific set of challenges which are not shared in many other pre-medical school experience. Hence, students who type as gritty on a medical school entry exam might not remain gritty in medical school.

Grit needs to be developed as a team within an organisation with a shared goal (Duckworth, 2016; Lee & Duckworth, 2018). This development starts with assembling a group of individuals with similar interests. These individuals are then encouraged to work together with chances to carry out deliberate practice and constant reminders of their shared purpose. This group should be even encouraged to fail and learn from those failures.

This group will then develop grit as a unit (Duckworth, 2016).

Creating an environment which is demanding yet nurturing is key in promoting grit (Lee & Duckworth, 2018). Team-based or problem-based learning provides a conducive setting for such an environment to thrive in medical school. Students are grouped in teams and are faced with demanding challenges which would force them to work together over an extended period of time. These students are allowed to fail and learn from their mistakes. Over time, the team develops grit.

The formation of a culture which promotes and breeds grit within an organisation would be a stronger force to withstand the demanding challenges of healthcare than just a selection of gritty individuals. Structural changes in healthcare to allow for organisational grit to take root should be undertaken. Increased reports of physician burnout necessitate that healthcare workers be given support. Organisational grit would give healthcare workers the support they require.

Note on Contributor

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Declaration of Interest

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