

influencing CASC outcomes. Anxiety and other unique challenges faced by IMGs can contribute to performance gaps. Educational theory emphasises multimodal frameworks and peer-led mentoring can enhance learning outcomes and alleviate exam-related anxiety, thereby narrowing these disparities. This study evaluates the impact of a structured, peer-led mentoring approach on CASC success, aiming to target the unmet needs of IMG candidates and develop effective, scalable strategies for reducing performance disparities.

**Methods:** In 2024, a structured mentoring programme was designed at South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, supporting CASC candidates preparing for their first attempt. The cohort included 8 trainees of both genders, from different ethnic and training backgrounds. The mentoring framework integrated the following components:

Initial planning with clear expectations and timeline.

Practice framework of all station types and a consistent practice schedule, which increased in frequency and intensity closer to the exam.

Station-specific flowcharts and time-saving strategies provided to enhance efficiency.

Ongoing support with practical advice on anxiety management and exam logistics.

Full mock examinations conducted with detailed feedback.

**Results:** All participants passed the CASC on their first attempt. Qualitative feedback, analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-stage thematic framework, revealed the following key themes:

**Clarity and Structure:** Participants highlighted that a structured timetable and clear objectives improved focus and confidence, making the workload more manageable and progress tangible.

**Practical Resources:** Flowcharts and checklists were deemed highly effective in simplifying complex tasks with multiple potential approaches.

**Emotional Support:** Regular peer interactions reduced anxiety and fostered a collaborative learning environment.

**Feedback and Reflection:** Mock exams with detailed feedback were viewed as instrumental in identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

**Conclusion:** This study demonstrates the potential for peer-led mentorship programmes during CASC examination preparation, minimising candidate anxiety and helping to foster equitable outcomes. Results highlighted the benefits of structure, consistency, targeted support and personalised feedback, tailored to the diverse needs of the trainees. Further research with larger cohorts is recommended to quantitatively evaluate the generalisability of these findings. An expanded version of this mentoring programme might be introduced within the Trust. Establishing such a programme could not only improve exam pass rates but also foster a more inclusive and supportive training environment within psychiatry.

Abstracts were reviewed by the RCPsych Academic Faculty rather than by the standard *BJPsych Open* peer review process and should not be quoted as peer-reviewed by *BJPsych Open* in any subsequent publication.

## The Impact of Indian Teachers of Psychiatry (IToP) Scholarship for Teachers Towards Enrichment of Psychiatry Teaching Skills (STEPS): A Model for Capacity Building of Psychiatry Teachers

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**Aims:** To assess the impact of Indian teachers of psychiatry (IToP) scholarship for teachers towards enrichment of psychiatry teaching skills (STEPS).

**Methods:** It is a cross-sectional study with Institutional ethical clearance that was carried out online through Google forms from March to Nov 2024. Data was collected through a specifically developed structured questionnaire. Most questions were open-ended questions, and a few were graded on a five-point Likert scale (1 to 5).

**Results:** A total of 16 participants, who were trained from the year 2020 to 2024 in IToP STEPS programme were included in the study. 10 were men and 6 women. Faculty ranged from Professors to Assistant Professors. 75% were involved in teaching both undergraduates and postgraduates. All rated the training as 4/5 on quality that fulfilled the expectation. They felt better equipped with teaching methods, innovative strategies and assessments.

**Conclusion:** Capacity building of psychiatry teachers is much needed to enhance quality of training and thereby psychiatry services. IToP STEPS is a model that can be replicated in other countries where psychiatry education and services is a challenge.

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## Exploring Medical Student Experiences of the Use of Escape Rooms as an Innovative Teaching Method Within Undergraduate Psychiatry Teaching

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**Aims:** The study aimed to explore the experience and opinions of third year medical students regarding the use of escape rooms as a teaching modality in undergraduate psychiatry education. This research will help inform whether escape rooms have a viable role in medical education.

**Methods:** This was a mixed method study using quantitative and qualitative elements. Quantitative data was captured on Likert scales, through survey completion, immediately after completion of an escape room (n=64) based on their psychiatry curriculum at a revision day. The qualitative element of study included two focus groups of students (n=7), who had attended the revision day, to discuss their experience of escape rooms in medical education. Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then analysed using thematic analysis.

**Results:** 97% of surveyed students found the escape room an enjoyable experience. 57 (89%) students reported a positive improvement in knowledge, with only one student disagreeing. 72% of students reported it had improved their clinical skills. Free text responses included 'really good revision exercise' and 'made revision good fun'. The main themes identified from focus groups were that escape rooms were an interactive and enjoyable learning experience which improved knowledge and allowed students to identify knowledge gaps to focus their revision. They enjoyed working in smaller groups, which they found inclusive, and some students felt this improved their team working skills. Some students found that the timed and competitive element detracted from the

educational aspect and negatively impacted team working skills, whilst others valued this.

**Conclusion:** The findings of this study suggest that escape rooms could provide an innovative approach to teaching methods in undergraduate psychiatry. In this study, students found the escape room an enjoyable and beneficial experience that improved their knowledge, and they perceived a benefit for revision as the day was situated close to final year examinations. Equally, escape rooms could be used in a myriad of other ways to support learning in different contexts. Given the popularity of experiential learning in medical education this may be an option to provide positive experiences in undergraduate psychiatric education as well as meaningful educational experiences.

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## Assessment of Knowledge of Learning Disabilities and Workshop for Palestinian Primary School Teachers: A Single-Center Study

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**Aims:** To assess primary school teachers' knowledge of learning disabilities, and design interactive lectures targeting revealed gaps.

**Methods:** A 30-question survey was designed based on previously published research alongside a discussion with teacher supervisors. It was comprised of true-or-false or multiple-choice questions, divided into five parts: demographic details, learning disabilities general knowledge, specific learning disabilities, developmental disorders, and management.

A Four-session workshop was held at Terra Santa College in Bethlehem from December 2024 to January 2025, provided by a speech therapist and a psychiatry resident, with the support of Pro Terra Sancta (Bethlehem). Each session was two hours long providing knowledge and interactive activities followed by discussion. The sessions correlated with the different parts of the questionnaire. The first session focused on normal child development, learning disability types, and manifestations. The second session covered specific learning disorders: dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. The third session had an emphasis on developmental disorders: autism spectrum disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Finally, the fourth session was about multidisciplinary management, the role of teachers, and individualized learning plans.

**Results:** Twenty-eight Palestinian primary school teachers filled out the pre-assessment survey. They were all female, of different age groups (9 teachers under 35 years old, 12 between 36–45, and 7 older than 45), and several disciplines (including 9 teaching Languages (32.1%)). Among the participants, 57.1% had related training previously, 92.9% said they teach a student with a learning disability, and 75% described teaching these children as 'very challenging' (n=4) or 'challenging' (n=17). The teachers' average overall score on the pre-assessment was 55% correct, with the highest section mean being developmental disorders (62%), compared with specific learning disorders (34%). Interestingly, most mistakes were related to the misconception that learning or development disorders can be

diagnosed primarily with brain imaging. A quick analysis, using RStudio 2024.04, showed a significant difference ( $p<0.05$ ) in overall scores when comparing those who had prior similar training (mean=60.6%) and those who had not (mean=51.5%), with no significant differences among other demographic measures.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with teachers reporting more confidence and enthusiasm to interact with students with learning and developmental disabilities. Specifically, they cited the activities as interactive and relevant to their experiences.

**Conclusion:** Teachers have a big role in identifying and supporting children with learning disabilities, therefore, awareness campaigns should target this population. Such small studies can lay the groundwork for future research and workshops.

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## Lessons Learned From a National Student-Led Audit by SPARC (Student Psychiatry Audit and Research Collaborative) on Emergency Department Management of Self-Harm in Under-18s

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**Aims:** National audits provide valuable experience in research, leadership, and clinical governance. However, student-led initiatives present unique logistical and methodological challenges, including variability in training, data consistency, and long-term engagement. The Student Psychiatry Audit and Research Collaborative (SPARC) conducted a national audit to assess Emergency Department (ED) management of self-harm in under-18s across UK EDs between 2021 and 2023. This study aimed to examine the challenges encountered during the audit process and identify key lessons to inform future student-led research projects. Given the complexity of a multi-centre audit, we anticipated difficulties in training, data collection, and sustaining student engagement over two years.

**Methods:** Medical students were recruited as regional leads via university networks and psychiatric societies. A multidisciplinary committee of doctors and students oversaw the audit, which reviewed nearly 500 ED records across nine medical schools from 2021 to 2023. Data collection, based on National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, involved a retrospective review but was complicated by a mid-audit guideline change, necessitating adaptations in data extraction. A snowball teaching method was used to train data collectors, who joined at different stages of the project. Following audit completion, challenges at each stage were analysed and compared with similar national audits to develop recommendations for future student-led initiatives.