



Balancing Life and Work in Surgery

The Careers subcommittee of SSSA recently held our second careers workshop on the evening of 26th of October 2007 on the issue of 'Balancing Life and Work in Surgery'. We were honoured to have a panel of speakers; A/Prof Deborah Colville (Consulting Ophthalmologist), Mr Seevan Seevanayagam (Cardiothoracic Surgeon), Dr Jill Tomlinson (Plastic Registrar) and Dr Graham Starkey (General Surgical Fellow) available to share their opinions on the realities of a surgical lifestyle.

The workshop was attended by medical students from various years and clinical schools who were keen to hear more on this relevant issue prior to embarking on their medical career. We began with a feast of pizzas prior to the workshop to settle everyone's rumbling tummies and for students the chance to interact with the surgeons.

During their presentation, the speakers dissected the difficult topic of balancing personal satisfaction, family with the demands of a surgical lifestyle. Junior and senior surgeons presented enlightening personal perspectives on their sacrifices and their aspirations as they cope with the challenging lifestyle in surgery. It was also encouraging to hear that there is a place for women in surgery and that starting a family is expected to become more attainable as the culture changes in surgery to better accommodate for a new generation of female surgeons. Despite the individual views and perspectives regarding training it was also promising to hear that in the end the advice that surgeons had for students were one and the same. - "If you really want to be surgeon, then go for it, but step into it prepared for the worst and plan ahead, be it about marriage, children or training."

The session was well received by everyone. Many were surprised but grateful for the 'frankness' displayed by the surgeons and left inspired by their personal experiences. Overall, the students gained great insight into the surgical lifestyle and will be looking forward to the upcoming workshops.

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Career Officers of SSSA



The workshop was sponsored by the Department of Surgery, University of Melbourne