Cover Art

Artist’s Statement: On Mentorship

As a medical student, finding mentors is challenging, especially in surgery, which is rooted in an apprenticeship model and still has a rigid hierarchy that makes it difficult for students to explore new avenues for growth. At times, finding mentors can seem daunting, as this often compels trainees to approach their superiors rather than the other way around. For me, I was able to build connections through research and clinical experiences. When I think of my mentors in this field, their uniting qualities are their willingness to listen to me, make my ideas feel valued, and cultivate mutual trust. Exchanges with my mentors have shaped my career goals for the better and helped me refine my areas of interest. As clinical education evolves, one constant is the idea of mentorship. Good mentors advise, but great mentors elevate their mentees.

In my painting On Mentorship, on the cover of this issue, I depict an example of great mentorship. We see a young female surgeon operating with a headlamp and loupes as the focus of the piece. Her mentor is proportionally smaller and to the side, a supporting figure, drawing the eye to the more detailed trainee. As I progress in my career and make the transition from mentee to mentor (figuratively moving from left to right in this piece), I hope that I, too, will elevate my mentees by being trustworthy, open, and empathetic to support our mutual growth as physicians.

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