

Junior doctor and student near peer teaching:

A novel approach to a medical publishing group

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Introduction

Medical textbooks are integral to teaching. No publishing group has used juniors (junior doctors and medical students) rather than senior clinicians as their primary writers. Potential advantages of junior-led teaching include the approachability and enthusiasm of tutors and relevance of teaching material to current student challenges¹⁻³. These benefits have already been demonstrated in the context of face-to-face clinical teaching. Additionally, contributing to books offers an opportunity for juniors to develop writing, teaching and teamwork skills, whilst also reinforcing medical knowledge, as has occurred with 'near-peer' teaching³.

Hypothesis and aims

Hypothesis

Our hypothesis was that juniors would write books which effectively address the educational needs faced by current medical students, and that this would complement (but not replace) teaching by senior staff.

Aims

1. Produce an OSCE textbook involving juniors at each stage
2. Evaluate the feedback and sales data from this project
3. Develop more titles using the principles learnt

Methods

- Juniors were approached to contribute to a range of independently published medical textbooks from 'The Unofficial Guide to Medicine' series, published independently by a junior doctor.
- Senior clinicians reviewed all of the work to ensure factual accuracy, but did not write any of the books.
- New books were developed as a result of junior input, coming to the senior editor themselves with ideas for future titles.
- Social media was used to gain rapid feedback from other juniors on potential titles, contents lists and chapter layouts.
- People purchasing the book were invited to give qualitative feedback and an overall rating on a 5 point scale.

Results

The first title 'The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs' has sold 8000 copies in 31 countries over 20 months.

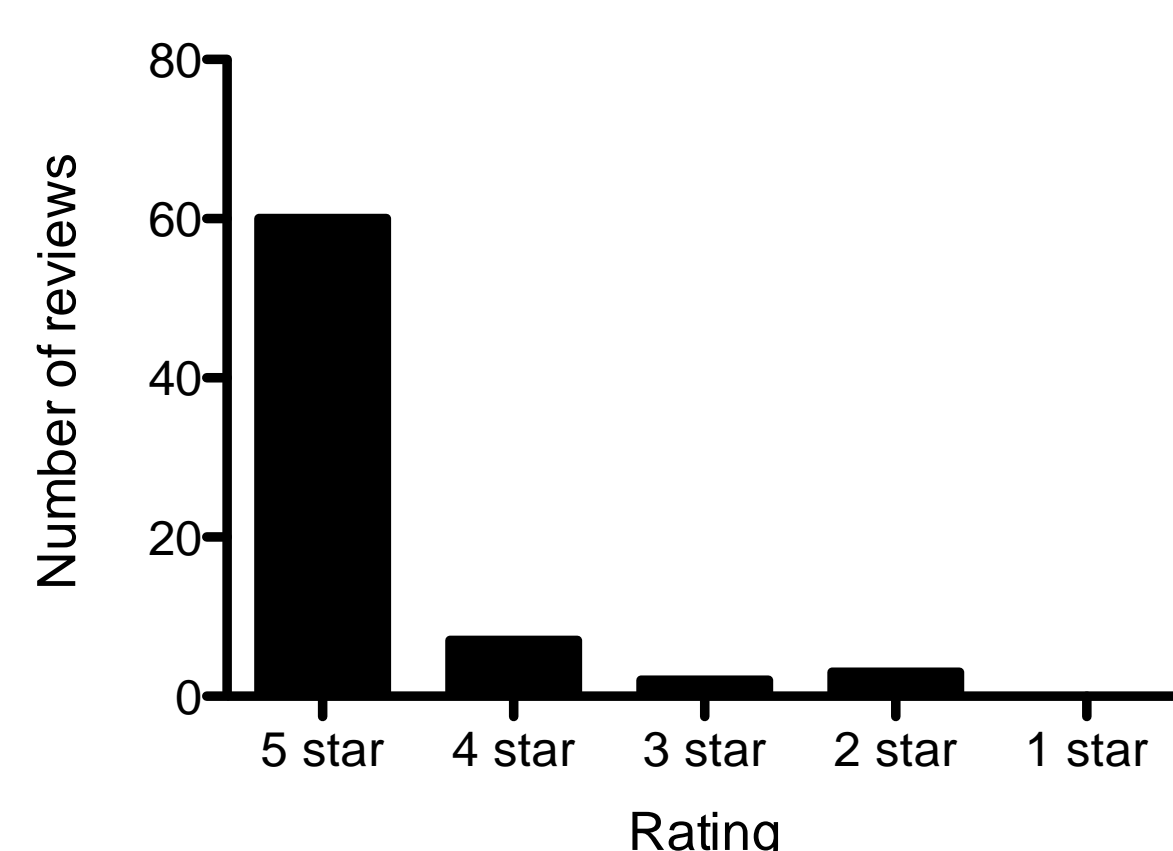


Figure 1. Feedback on a five point scale. 5 stars being the best rating and 1 star as the worst. 93% of 72 respondents awarding it 4 or 5 out of 5 for overall quality. The average rating is currently 4.7/5.

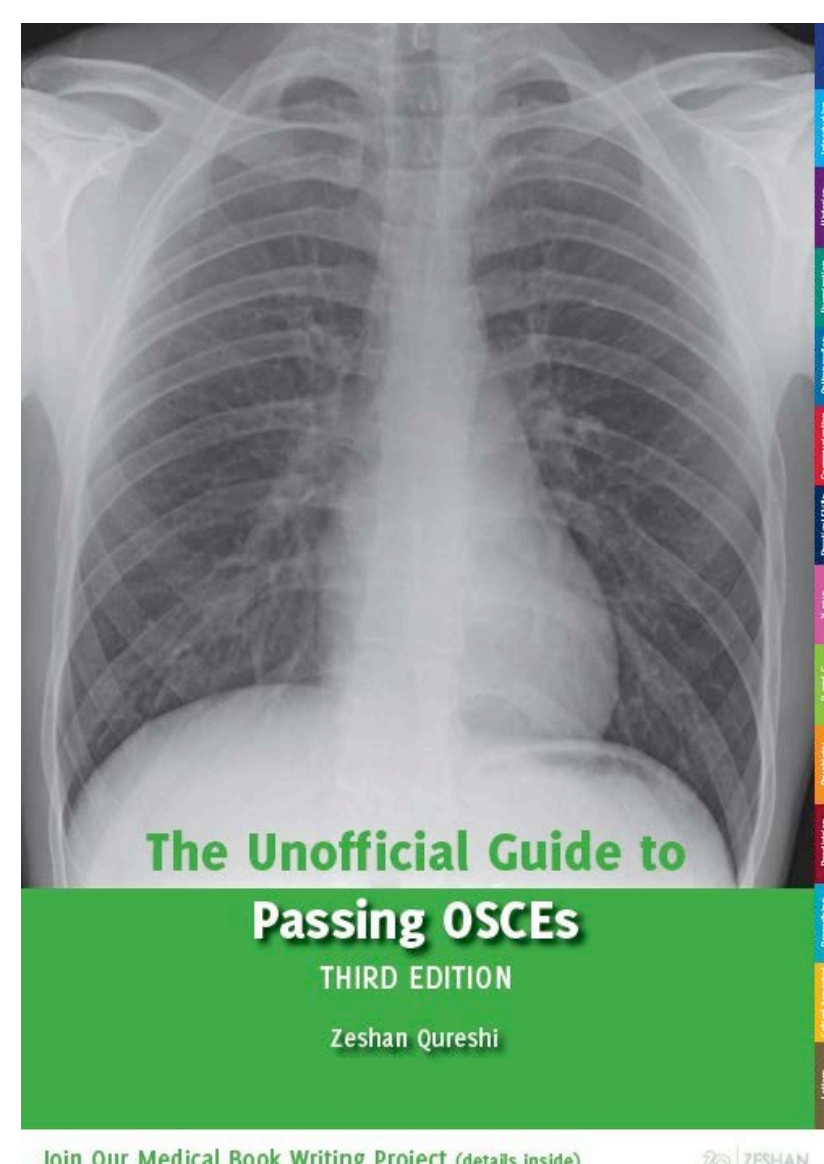


Figure 2. The Unofficial Guide to Passing OSCEs.

Four further titles have been released and approximately 100 juniors have become involved internationally, with high performers advancing rapidly: two students have progressed from book reviewers to editors within a year of mentorship.

Provides succinct, useful detail in a format conducive to practicing clinical examinations. Focuses on key steps of the examination process.

Formatted in a similar way to how most people make notes themselves - concise, bullet-pointed and logically ordered, so a great time-saver!

With contribution from both medical students and fully qualified doctors, the book proves both very relevant to the OSCEs but also written with expertise. The content is comprehensive and will apply to any variation of the OSCE that your med school has.

Really clear text with good pictures. Aimed at the right level for medical finals with great examples of scenarios and tips for how to improve.

Figure 3. Students feedback highlighting key themes in written comments about the books.

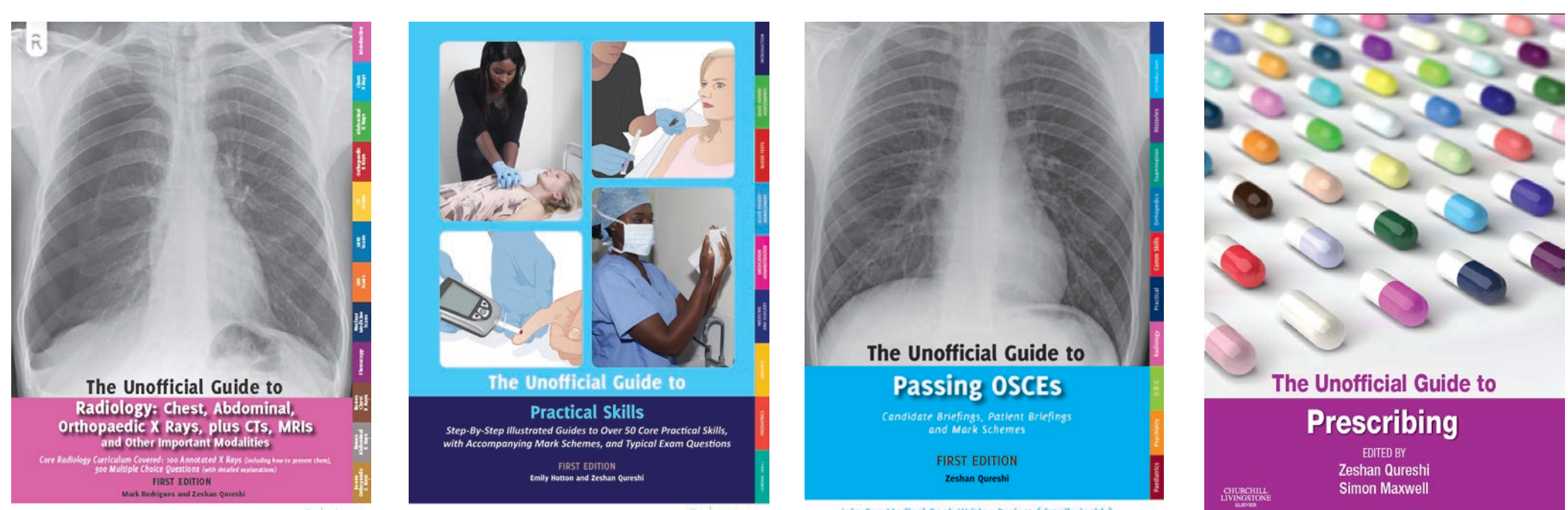


Figure 4. Four new titles that have since been released from the 'Unofficial Guide to Medicine' series.

Conclusion

Juniors are a motivated, dynamic, innovative group, capable of significantly adding to the medical textbook library. We have developed a publishing model that utilises this worldwide resource, whilst also giving extensive feedback to the contributors, allowing them to rapidly develop as writers. Overall the project set up has generated a sustainable infrastructure to facilitate junior-led publishing, and has the capacity to expand and accommodate new initiatives and ideas. Our evaluation suggests this publishing model may address unmet educational needs of juniors.

Future directions

- Six titles are currently in development for the Unofficial Guide to Medicine series.
- All of these have stemmed directly from ideas originating from juniors.
- The popularity for the books is increasing, with sales in 31 countries, and students from 9 countries involved in book writing.
- The series will continue to develop juniors skill in writing, publishing and project development.
- Ultimately the series hopes to establish itself as a trusted and popular publisher with worldwide successes.

References

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