

# Worrying rise in number of medical students in prostitution over last 10 years

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One in ten students now claim to know someone who is using prostitution to pay for university fees, a medical student writing for the *Student BMJ* claims.

Although the numbers are still small, this figure as a percentage, is two and a half times larger than 10 years ago when just 4% of [students](#) claimed to know a peer placing themselves in the sex trade. This figure rose to 6% in 2006 and now stands at just under 10%.

The author, a final year medical student at the University of Birmingham, writes about the obvious [correlation](#) between rising tuition fees and the prevalence of [prostitution](#) among students. She argues that it is due to the rising costs of both tuition and living that students are finding themselves in huge amounts of debt.

The English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) has noticed an increase in the number of calls from students considering sex work. A spokesperson for the ECP says that many [medical students](#) think "prostitution is the only means of financial survival. [...] Jobs in shops and pubs that students usually take up are increasingly scarce and low paid".

Medical schools do not believe that prostitution among students is widespread. They have no specific rule on this matter but do suggest that medical students act within the General Medical Council's guidance for medical practice, "Duties of a doctor". However, this does not necessarily state that a doctor cannot be a prostitute. Furthermore, no

case has been recorded in which a patient's health has suffered because a doctor also worked in this trade.

The author concludes that because there is no official guidance on the issue, there is no clear answer for students. What is worrying, she writes, is when students think "they have no choice but to resort to prostitution" and questions whether the "hike in fees" will lead to an increase in students entering the [sex trade](#).

An accompanying editorial looks at the case of a medical student who faced either prostitution or "dropping out of medical school". The author, who wishes to remain anonymous, argues that "if studies are not grossly affected by how they are funded [...] then it doesn't matter how we make a living". His opinions have, however, been met by some criticism from older students who had feelings of "condemnation" and "disgust" towards a medical student using prostitution to pay off his debts.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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