

Viewpoint: Strong mentorship 'Paramount' in surgical training

December 19 2014



(HealthDay)—The role of mentorship is explored through the career of Alfred Blalock, M.D., in a viewpoint piece published online Dec. 17 in *JAMA Surgery*.

Clark D. Kensinger, M.D., from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, Tenn., and colleagues describe the role of mentorship throughout the [career](#) of Blalock.

The researchers note that Blalock benefited from strong mentorship under William Stewart Halsted, M.D., during his early career while in [surgical training](#). After he did not get reappointed to the surgical program following his second year, his [training](#) continued under Samuel Crowe, M.D., chief of otolaryngology, and with Crowe's support, he

acquired a general surgical residency position at Vanderbilt University. There he was mentored by Barney Brooks, M.D., who took an independent approach to mentorship, allowing Blalock to pursue his interests and offering support and recommendations for surgical societies. After advancement to chairman of surgery at Johns Hopkins, Blalock continued to accept ideas and help. In addition, he generated a successful collaborative environment by recognizing and developing talent; his personal struggles helped inspire his residents to handle adversity.

"Finding strong mentorship is paramount during surgical training," the authors write. "Mentorship is invaluable in career development because it allows for an introduction to key people, maintains productivity, and helps provide a framework for advice regarding career decisions and goals, which helps surgeons establish clinical and research priorities."

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Citation: Viewpoint: Strong mentorship 'Paramount' in surgical training (2014, December 19) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-12-viewpoint-strong-mentorship-paramount-surgical.html>

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