

# Diversity in leadership essential to engage minority-ethnic medical students with academia

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Minority-ethnic medical students must have more role-models in senior leadership positions if they are to engage with academia. This is one of the conclusions drawn by a group of medical students writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* about the drivers and barriers to engaging with academia.

Barriers currently hampering the chances of minority-ethnic [medical students](#) accessing formal pathways into academia, they write, include differential attainment and unconscious bias, difficulties forming meaningful mentor-mentee relationships, as well as the lack of role models from minority-ethnic backgrounds.

Drawing on their own experiences, the medical students write that while progress has been made to increase the number of academics from minority ethnic backgrounds, the same progress has not been made celebrating them as people or their contributions to science, especially given the inspirational impact individuals such as Mary Seacole or Charles Richard Drew have had on future generations of students.

Co-author Carlos Curtis-Lopez, of the University of Manchester [medical school](#), said: "Nationally, major research funders and policymakers could start by making a real statement of intent addressing this problem. They should also ensure a proportion of those in senior leadership positions reflect the entire population that they serve and that there is diverse representation across committees, selection and award panels."

He added: "By having medical students from minority-[ethnic backgrounds](#) see something of themselves among those in senior leadership roles, it could be enough of a nudge to push them into having a conversation with academics in their institutions about pursuing a career in academia."

Senior author Dr. Rakesh Patel, Clinical Associate Professor in Medical Education at the University of Nottingham, said: "Given diversity of thinking and representation are associated with greater scientific impact and growth, not having minority-ethnic students consider academia is a lost opportunity for all."

**More information:** Carlos Curtis-Lopez et al, Drivers and barriers to

engaging with academia: a minority-ethnic medical student perspective,  
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