

Peer Review

# Review of: "Impostor in the Mirror: A Clinician's Reflection on Impostor Syndrome"

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This is a commentary piece inspired by the author's personal experience of impostor syndrome, informed by his experiences of working within the medical field.

The piece benefits from this personal narrative, which makes the overall voice of the piece very compelling.

The author links impostor syndrome to the structure of medical training, which encourages focus on personal mistakes and limitations as grounds for self-reflection. Compounded with the rotational structure of training, which interrupts the formation of workplace relationships and opportunities for mentorship, as well as a culture of humility and accountability, which at times verges on blame, it can create the expectation of infallibility that is unrealistic in a training environment.

As a practising clinician, the reflections certainly resonated with my own experience, and I found the discussion valuable in informing my own self-reflection on how the workplace culture influences my personal expectations of my performance.

The essay would benefit from an intersectional perspective, which would take into account how this experience might be compounded for certain individuals based on their sociodemographic and cultural characteristics; in particular, groups historically under-represented in the medical field are likely to struggle with the self-perception of their abilities and lack of systemic support to a greater degree.

The author correctly identified certain aspects of professional culture, such as the focus on self-reflection, as drivers of this phenomenon. Beyond this, I believe the discussion could be expanded to include a mention of the culture of litigation and blame, often fuelled by media discussions of

shortcomings in medical care, which is likely to contribute to individuals' fear of less-than-perfect performance at work.

Further links to published research could inform a more full-bodied set of recommendations regarding systemic changes that could facilitate a culture change.

Overall, this was an insightful piece on the systemic drivers of impostor syndrome in the medical profession, which represents a valuable contribution to the existing discourse.

## **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.