



FRAMEWORK

Junior Medical Leadership at Monash Health

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Document governance	
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1. BACKGROUND

Establishing Junior Medical Staff (JMS) leadership at Monash Health is rooted in recognising the value and potential of junior doctors in healthcare services. Research and literature emphasise the importance of empowering junior doctors to take on leadership roles:

- **Patient-centred care:** Junior doctors often have direct contact with patients. Studies have shown that junior doctors who are empowered to make decisions and take leadership roles in patient care can lead to improvements and better patient outcomes.¹
- **Teamwork and communication:** Effective teamwork and communication among healthcare professionals is essential for delivering high-quality care. Junior doctors, as part of the healthcare team, can play a vital role in promoting teamwork and communication, especially when they are given leadership roles.¹
- **Innovation and change:** Junior doctors can bring fresh perspectives and ideas to healthcare services. They can identify areas for improvement and drive innovation and change within their departments, leading to more efficient and effective healthcare delivery.²
- **Professional development:** Leadership roles can provide junior doctors with opportunities to develop their skills and abilities, which can benefit them both professionally and personally. These experiences can also contribute to their overall job satisfaction and retention in the healthcare workforce.³

Currently at Monash Health, junior medical leadership is supported formally and informally through:

- Chief Registrars - Annual JMS leadership positions within a program/service, nominated by SMS leadership. They advocate for JMS and promote JMS interests while aligning these with the organisation's needs and functions.
- The Junior Medical Staff Advisory and Redesign Committee (JMARC) - JMARC promotes the interests of JMS and ensures they have ongoing, substantive input into organisational matters affecting their welfare, clinical work, education and training. Chief Registrars are ex officio members of the committee.
- Monash RMO Society - A not-for-profit dedicated to providing JMS with food, drinks, fun, community & support.
- The JMS Education and Training Committee - A representative group of prevocational doctors with a focus on medical education including access, program design and implementation, and evaluation.
- Program/Specialty/Ward based support

By involving JMS in leadership positions and clinical governance, with dedicated non-clinical time for Chief Registrars, Monash aims to harness their skills, perspectives, and ideas to enhance healthcare delivery, improve patient outcomes, and promote JMS wellbeing and satisfaction.

1. Elias Ibrahim, J., Jeffcott, S., Davis, M.-C., & Chadwick, L. (2013). Recognizing junior doctors' potential contribution to patient safety and health care quality improvement. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 27(2), 273–286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14777261311321824>
2. Sharkey, A. R., Magee, L., & Trent, A. (2019). Building the future: junior doctors as leaders. *Clinical Radiology*, 74(7), 492–495. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crad.2019.03.024>
3. Blake, T., & Whallett, A. (2016). Leadership and the medical registrar: how can organisations support these unsung heroes? *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 92(1094), 735–740. <https://doi.org/10.1136/postgradmedj-2016-134262>

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2. PURPOSE

Through the ongoing support of Junior Medical Leadership, from the top down, Monash Health aims to create a culture of collaboration, engagement, and continuous improvement. Ultimately enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. The purpose of strengthening junior medical leadership at Monash Health is multi-faceted and encompasses several key objectives:

- **Enhancing Patient-Centred Care and Clinical Governance:** By actively involving junior doctors in leadership roles at the program and unit levels, Monash Health aims to improve patient-centred care while ensuring high standards of quality and safety. Junior doctors often have direct contact with patients and their families, providing them with unique insights into patient needs and experiences. Empowering junior doctors to take on leadership responsibilities allows them to advocate for patients, contribute to care planning, and drive initiatives that prioritise patient outcomes, satisfaction, and the overall quality and safety of healthcare delivery.
- **Advocating for Junior Medical Staff:** Junior doctors face unique challenges and concerns throughout their training and professional journey. Strengthening junior medical leadership is grounded in the need to advocate for the rights, welfare, and professional interests of JMS. By providing a platform for their voices to be heard, addressing their concerns, and involving them in decision-making processes, Monash Health aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment that values the contributions of junior doctors.
- **Promoting Effective Teamwork and Communication:** Effective teamwork and communication are critical for delivering high-quality healthcare. Junior doctors, as integral members of healthcare teams, play a vital role in promoting collaborative and cohesive working environments. By involving junior doctors in leadership positions, Monash Health aims to foster teamwork, enhance interdisciplinary communication, and promote a culture of respect and collaboration among healthcare professionals.
- **Facilitating Professional Development:** Leadership roles provide junior doctors with valuable opportunities for professional development. By taking on leadership responsibilities, junior doctors can enhance their skills in areas such as communication, decision-making, teamwork, and strategic thinking. Engaging in leadership activities also exposes them to administrative and managerial aspects of healthcare, broadening their perspective and preparing them for future leadership roles. Furthermore, the experience gained through leadership positions can contribute to their overall job satisfaction, career advancement, and retention within the healthcare workforce.
- **Driving Innovation and Change:** Junior doctors bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and enthusiasm to healthcare services. They often possess up-to-date knowledge and are well-versed in emerging research and technologies. Leadership roles encourage JMS to identify areas for improvement, drive innovation, and effect positive change within their departments and the wider organisation. Their active participation in decision-making processes can lead to the development and implementation of new approaches, practices, and technologies that enhance the quality and efficiency of healthcare delivery.

3. VISION

To empower and inspire junior doctors to become exceptional leaders in healthcare. Through their leadership, we envision a healthcare system that is patient-centred, collaborative, innovative, and continuously improving. We strive to create an environment where junior doctors are supported, valued, and actively engaged in shaping the future of healthcare delivery at Monash Health and beyond.

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4. MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen junior medical leadership at Monash Health by:

- Providing platforms for effective communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among junior doctors.
- Advocating for the rights, welfare, and professional interests of JMS.
- Promoting teamwork, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a culture of respect and collaboration among healthcare professionals.
- Facilitating the professional development of junior doctors through tailored training, mentorship programs, and leadership opportunities.
- Driving innovation, change, and continuous improvement in healthcare delivery through the fresh perspectives and ideas of junior doctors.
- Ensuring active involvement of junior doctors in clinical governance, quality assurance, and safety initiatives to uphold the highest standards of patient care and safety.

5. SCOPE

The scope of Junior Medical Leadership encompasses all JMS at Monash Health, with a particular focus on Chief Registrars and JMARC. This includes junior doctors across all departments, services, specialties, and units. All doctors, at all level of training, have the potential to contribute to leadership initiatives. It extends to both clinical and non-clinical aspects of their roles, recognising that effective leadership extends beyond direct patient care. The scope also includes engaging junior doctors in decision-making processes, promoting their professional development, and addressing their concerns and needs within the organisation.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

To implement and strengthen Junior Medical Leadership at Monash, a comprehensive approach is required, focusing on key aspects of JMARC and the role of Chief Registrars within the organisation.

1. As the primary JMS representative body at Monash Health, JMARC will continue to strengthen the work and reach of the Committee. This will be done through:
 - a. Active engagement of junior doctors in decision-making processes by ensuring their voices are heard when developing organisational policies, procedures, and initiatives through JMARC.
 - b. Promoting collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork among junior doctors by facilitating communication channels and encouraging knowledge sharing via JMARC, Monash Doctors Leadership Committee (MDLC), and Chief Registrar channels at the program, service and unit level.
 - c. Review of Monash Health policies and procedures and the provision of feedback and recommendations to align them with the needs of junior doctors.

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- d. Escalation of concerns and feedback from junior doctors, and advocacy for JMS to senior leadership via JMARC, MDLC, and through individual program, service and unit directors.
 - e. Maintenance of regular reporting lines to MDLC.
2. Empowering Chief Registrars, whereby:
- a. Chief Registrar roles will be embedded within their Programs, Specialties, and/or Units, with their insight and advice actively sought on issues affecting JMS, including clinical governance, quality assurance, and patient safety.
 - b. All Chief Registrars will receive paid, allocated, and dedicated non-clinical time to focus on leadership activities, including strategic planning, attending meetings, liaising with stakeholders, and working on leadership-related projects. This allocation will be specific to the Chief Registrar position and the size of the JMS body they represent, in consultation with senior leadership.
 - c. There will be an ongoing focus on increasing the visibility and influence of Chief Registrars by actively involving them in organizational initiatives, decision-making processes, clinical governance, and quality and safety committees.
 - d. Training and development opportunities tailored to the specific needs of Chief Registrars and other junior doctors in leadership roles will be provided, including leadership workshops, mentorship programs, communication and teamwork training, and networking opportunities.
3. Leadership as a standard for all JMS, whereby:
- a. Integrate leadership principles at all levels, ensuring all JMS understand the importance of leadership in improving healthcare services, patient outcomes, and staff welfare. This will include creating awareness and integrating leadership principles into daily activities and clinical practices, fostering a conducive environment for learning, innovation, and growth.
 - b. Encourage all JMS to engage in quality improvement projects and research, facilitating the exploration and adoption of new evidence-based practices and innovations to enhance patient care and outcomes.
 - c. Cultivate a culture of continual improvement among JMS, where learning, reflection, and adaptation are valued and practiced routinely. This may include feedback mechanisms, learning platforms, and development opportunities that allow JMS to continuously refine their skills, knowledge, and practices.
 - d. Encourage interdisciplinary and cross-functional collaboration, enabling JMS to work alongside various professionals and departments, fostering mutual learning, and holistic development. This helps in integrating diverse perspectives, improving decision-making, and developing comprehensive solutions to complex healthcare challenges.

By implementing these steps, Monash Health can establish a robust framework for Junior Medical Leadership, ensuring dedicated non-clinical time for Chief Registrars and fostering a culture that values the leadership contributions of junior doctors. This framework will guide the work of JMARC and the Chief Registrars and help to achieve their goals and objectives in 2023 and beyond.

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7. PRINCIPLES

Aligned with Monash Health's pursuit of excellence and guiding principles, where:

- We work with humility, respect, kindness and compassion in high performing teams
- We integrate teaching, research and innovation to continuously learn and improve
- We manage our resources wisely and sustainably to provide value for our community

The principles guiding Junior Medical Leadership include:

- Equity and fairness: Ensuring equal opportunities for all junior doctors to contribute and lead.
- Collaboration: Encouraging teamwork and cooperation among junior doctors, senior medical staff, and all Monash Health personnel.
- Professional development: Providing resources and support for junior doctors to develop their leadership skills and abilities.
- Patient-centred care: Prioritising patient needs and outcomes in all leadership decisions and actions.

8. FOLLOW UP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure the effectiveness of junior medical leadership initiatives, ongoing follow-up and evaluation are essential. Accountability mechanisms will be strengthened and complement existing processes to monitor the implementation of recommendations and facilitate continuous improvement.

1. JMARC shall provide a monthly verbal report of the committee's activities and progress to MDLC, keeping all stakeholders informed about the ongoing efforts and outcomes of junior medical leadership.
2. The outcomes and impact of junior medical leadership initiatives, will be evaluated using feedback and data to inform adjustments and improvements to the program. This evaluation process will include reviewing key performance indicators, tracking changes in healthcare delivery, and measuring the contributions and effectiveness of Chief Registrars and other leadership positions through JMARC, MDLC, and at the program, service and/or unit level.
3. Continuously monitor the effectiveness of JMARC and the contributions of Chief Registrars, ensuring alignment with the evolving needs and expectations of junior doctors via the annual report to MDLC. The Medical Administration Registrar and Directors of Medical Services will continue to engage in regular discussions with Chief Registrars, program/specialty representatives, and other stakeholders to gather insights and identify areas for improvement.

9. RESOURCES

To support the successful implementation of Junior Medical Leadership, adequate resources and support are crucial. The following measures will ensure that Chief Registrars and junior doctors have the necessary resources to thrive in their leadership roles:

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1. Provide necessary resources and support to Chief Registrars and junior doctors in leadership positions, such as access to mentorship, leadership training, administrative support, and relevant educational materials. This support will empower Chief Registrars to focus on their leadership responsibilities effectively and enable junior doctors to participate in leadership development programs.
2. Offer opportunities for collaboration and networking with senior medical staff and other healthcare professionals to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge. Organise workshops, seminars, and conferences that facilitate interactions between junior doctors and experienced leaders, fostering a culture of mentorship and knowledge-sharing.
3. Ensure the availability of appropriate, paid, administrative time to facilitate the non-clinical responsibilities of Chief Registrars. Administrative assistance will enable Chief Registrars to manage their leadership activities efficiently and effectively, contributing to the overall success of Junior Medical Leadership initiatives.

By prioritising follow-up and accountability and allocating the necessary resources and support, Monash Health can sustain and nurture a thriving Junior Medical Leadership program that empowers junior doctors to become exceptional leaders in healthcare.

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