

My leadership journey

Dr Shahid Wahid. *MBBS Ncl Cert. Med. Ed. Ncl FRCP Lond FRCP Edin*

As I contemplate the next stage of my expanding Medical Director role in a new Trust (South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust) I have reflected on my journey.

Medical leadership in my experience can be placed in 3 broad areas that do overlap: clinical, educational and management leadership. "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants"-Sir Isaac Newton. The above quote aptly describes my journey to date from my medical student days from 1990 at Newcastle University through to where I am. I really have stood on the shoulders of many a giant as I learnt my leadership skills.

As a medical student it was the clinical leadership of the Diabetologists and Endocrinologists that inspired me and helped me develop clinical leadership in my specialty up to the point of Consultant hood. I must also pay due note to those Physicians that have been the giants in general medicine, particularly in North Tees, that encouraged me to maintain my general medicine skills and develop skills in acute medicine. Through training I have been lucky enough to have engaged in educational and management leadership through being an Associate College Tutor, a trainee representative on training committees and Trust management committees-contributing in practical ways to better patient care. It is this that has stood me in good stead to continue my clinical and educational leadership by developing services in Diabetes & Endocrinology and Acute Medicine locally and delivering educational change locally and in the region through various positions.

It was a giant of a Medical Director that inspired me and supported me to become Medical Director at South Tyneside. The last 3-years I can only describe as analogous to a sword being put through fire to build strength. I have never had any media training or formal management training in terms of a degree, as I have often undertaken and completed a number of tasks with the term "got the t-shirt" being my credentials. It has been the "generic" clinical, educational and management leadership skills that I have built over the years by standing on the shoulders of giants that has allowed me to undertake

service change at a macro-level and deal with crisis such as suspension of maternity services and retained organs.

I have encountered a range of leadership styles over the years and my style can be described as: "I use a combination of position, responsibility, attitude, skills and behaviour to allow others and the Trust to maximise potential and deliver the very best patient centred services in a sustainable manner".

I have two pieces of advice:

Allow others to stand on your shoulders to see further and maximise their potential. They will remember you as I remember all the giants' shoulders I have stood on.

Leadership skills in management are but the sum of the leadership skills we all display in clinical practice and teaching. Continue to hone the latter and consider at some point in your career to broadening them to management.