

THE BLACK BAG



BRISTOL MEDICAL SCHOOL
Freshers Edition 2025



The University of Bristol Medical Students' Magazine
Est. 1937

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Dr Mike Cadogan, Saara Pradhan, and Zin Htut

The Black Bag



Freshers Edition 2025

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A new Editor approaches!

Name: Will

Year: 4th

Height: 5'10 in
timberlands

Fears: Orcas



Hi everyone, it's Will. I'm thrilled to be taking on the mantle of Black Bag editor, having won the position through a fight to the death with the previous editor (RIP Zin).

Although my hands remain mangled and bloody from the fight, I am assembling a crack team of sub-editors and gossip-czars who are carrying out my bidding. If working for free under a demonic editor without giving you the cv-boost a position on the Scrubs committee, or the fame associated with starring in Clic would, then do get in touch at blackbag1937@gmail.com. As the following articles will demonstrate, we are desperately in need of fresh talent as we have clearly drained our current writers dry of whatever little talent they had to begin with.

Jokes aside, I am so excited for what this year has in store. I could not be presenting this issue without the hard work of everyone who has contributed to this magazine. Huge thanks to everyone who has put in work at the Black Bag, especially for this issue, but also thanks to all our predecessors who have fought to keep Black Bag going for approaching 80 years despite being sued and shut down. In line with the current medicolegal position though, I do intend to put an end to the Black Bag before it reaches 80 so we can preserve what little dignity it has.

For anyone familiar with the Black Bag, which is obviously anyone who isn't a fresher, you may notice some changes. This magazine is split into several sections to signpost what you might wish to check out. You'll enjoy all of it though, so just read it. These are, in order:

- Preachy advice you didn't ask for and don't need
- A sports section (controversially, we are counting Clic as a sport)
- The only genuinely original article we've published since 1957 - wait hang on is it meant to be a parody?
- An interview which we only booked because we thought President Joe meant Joe Biden but actually it was just Joe Phillips.
- Romantic advice for medics (we'd be better off teaching a dog the clarinet) – hit us up if you're hoping to book a personal ad xx
- Bog standard magazine stuff but with a “fun” medical twist

Read through to the end for some news about what's coming next for the Black Bag - including an upcoming launch party that YOU'RE invited to.

I'll probably highlight it elsewhere in the issue, but if you want to get involved, or can't wait for the next issue, or want to take part in fun challenges to earn prizes or attend secret events then do give us a follow on Instagram or TikTok! @theblackbagbristol

Also, we'll be hosting a poll on Instagram to vote for your favourite article in the issue, and whichever article loses we're going to kill the author. So, if you like your friend, then make sure to get involved on social media.

If you disagree with any part of this issue, assume it's satire. If you agree, assume it's not. Right, that should clear up any defamation or libel cases.

Apologies for the dull newsletter-like nature of this introduction, but without further ado I present to you the Freshers issue of Black Bag 2025. Enjoy!

Advice



Events you must go to

SEPTEMBER

27th – **Bristol SU Welcome Fair** – worth going to, even if you're hungover.

28th – **Back to School Night** – Absolute highlight of the first year social calendar. The perfect opportunity to have a one-night stand with someone so you can feel embarrassed in every lecture for the next 5 years.

OCTOBER

4th – **Galenicals Fresher's Fair** – Go here to sign up to a load of mailing lists for societies you won't go to until 3rd year when you realise that medic societies are actually fun.

10th – **Black Bag Launch Party** – the coolest night of the year, only cool people are there, not one to miss if you're cool.

NOVEMBER

4th – **Family Club Night** – even though it's at Basement 45, not one to miss! A great way to meet people in your year. No one likes an orphan, so get involved!

9th – **Medic Bar Crawl** – This might be the defining night of the year. You **must** be there. You **must** follow the dress code. We will see you there!

29th – **Varsity** – This is a must. Guaranteed to be a day you won't forget and a night you won't remember!

DECEMBER

1st – **First Year Christmas Ball** – People in my year still regularly discuss our First Year Christmas formal. Do not miss it. Get your ticket early – you don't want to be the only person in your CBL who doesn't go!

6th – **Sports Christmas Dinner** – For those of you in UBHRFC, you know you're not skipping a roast. For the rest of you, it's incredibly entertaining to watch the lads get absolutely plastered, so don't miss it.

JAN

10th – **Halfway Ball** – Without exaggerating, probably the biggest night of your whole time at UoB. Do NOT miss it. If you're supposed to be on a ski trip then 1) I hate you 2) cancel it.

The Official Black Bag Ultra Pro-Tip Guide to every year of the medical school to maximise your grades and bitches

Gateway aka *Secret Headstart*

- You're very much a part of the medical school. Don't let anyone make you feel otherwise.
- (On that note) get used to using Anki and other platforms early - it will come in handy later on!
- This year is slightly less intense than the rest of the years so it's a great opportunity to socialise, get used to the city, and get used to the campus before you start year 1. Be the only person in your CBL who knows how to use OneNote!
- This is the best year to be adventurous and try out different things! Meet as many people as possible, get the most out of it!
- That being said, it's still a year of your medical degree so work does need to be put in...
- Your lectures are what you get tested for your end of year exams... literally, the questions come directly from the slides!
- Make friends now. You're a smaller cohort. Get to know people well. It's easier!
- Ask us gateway alumni anything! we're always happy to help ☺

1st Year aka *the year of the silly fresh*

- Put yourself out there! It can seem terrifying and daunting when everything seems new but making friends is the best way to create a support network to get you through the hard times!
- Say yes! Uni life is full of weird and wonderful side quests, and some of my best memories are from when my mates asked me to go for a food shop, or help them do their washing, or search for a specific black and yellow striped top for their bee social. Anything that gets you out of your bedroom is a win!
- Take part in the med socials, there will be multiple nights out in term one and they are a great way to get to know people on your course.
- Join some societies! It's important to not only get involved with Galenicals societies but also try and join one separate from medicine - it's all too easy to get trapped in the medic bubble and it's nice sometimes to have some non-medic friends to provide you with some escape from the chaos.
- Please please pleaseeee stay on top of your work from the start of the year. I'm not saying study 24/7- make sure you have a life and don't become a library haunt, but at least watch and make basic notes on all the lectures. Future you will be eternally grateful when it comes to end of year exams; trust me, I've been there.
- Don't underestimate the medical school attendance policy. If you don't attend >80% of your teaching sessions (CBL, EC, placements, ethics, art of medicine, etc), you will be made to repeat the year. Those Thursday 9am ECs, or Tuesday 9am CBLs after utopia Mondays will be hell, but just show up. An attendance mark in pjs and 2 hours sleep is better than the alternative, and you will not be the only one I pinkie promise xx
- Be there for your friends. You don't know when you're going to need your people at uni - to cheer you up when you're feeling a bit shit, help you carry a free Hoover up park street, or even to help jump-start your car when you accidentally leave your headlights on overnight (What?! Such a stupid mistake. Who would do that...?). But to have a village, you need to be a villager. It can be hard to find a balance between

knowing when you need to look after and prioritise yourself, but I promise that you will never regret helping someone, and being there for them in a time of need - as you never know when you will need them to return the favour. Just be a nice person!

- Buy a Christmas tree, throw ridiculous themed surprise parties for people's birthdays, make a big deal out of every silly thing you can. My flatmates and I used to have flat dinner every Sunday, where we would take it in turns to cook for each other. Having a couple of hours every week set aside to just catch up and chill before the chaos started again the next day was LUSH - and it meant I only had to cook every 7 weeks on a Sunday!
- Finally, enjoy it! You are so lucky to be studying such an amazing course at an amazing university, in one of the best cities in the UK, so take advantage of it! First year flewwww by, and I can't wait to see what happens next year!

2nd Year aka *Things get Interesting*

- Please, please, please do not neglect your books! This is me saying this as someone who ran through all of second year on autopilot almost. Autopilot should not denote that I was doing anything useful however, but more reverting to my favourite place - my bed.
- ECC is such a fever dream. It was the first time I felt like I had to structure my own learning because no lectures means nothing to do... WRONG! You don't have to be an unpaid tenant at the hospital library but keeping a small note of the headlining conditions they teach you about will help massively in the long run.
- Equally and actually conversely - ECC is supposed to be your taster of 3rd year, so please take a chill pill. I said small note and actually learning how to speak and interact with patients is most important of all.
- Student choice is also equally a dream of the feverish variety. Take all the opportunities to make friends. You are trauma-bonded for life! Especially if you are accosted with English or Spanish jokes in a primary school classroom - although that may be a slightly niche experience.
- CBL is much more interesting and less of a snooze-fest than in first year. You will encounter actual conditions that make people unwell as opposed to everyone being fine. This makes it so much more engaging but also harder at times.
- MAKE MORE FRIENDS! You will have the opportunity to meet a whole different group of people so make the most of it.

3rd Year aka *Shit gets Real*

- The key is to not panic, and 99% of the cohort fail this step.
- Learn to live with uncertainty - no one will tell you what the hell you're supposed to be doing and just to confuse you even more they will use acronyms like CBD and miniCEX to ensure you are suitably lost in the hospitals (both literally and figuratively)
- You will spend the entire year thinking that if you're in the library you should be on the wards and if you're on the wards you should be in the library, the key to happiness is to go to neither of those places.
- It's ok to make the doctors on the wards think that you have 5000 more teaching sessions than you actually do.
- On outplacement you will have nothing better to do than to revise and host OSCE nights, embrace the neek lifestyle.
- 32 clerkings sounds like a lot but 2 a week is easy, alternatively you can do 16 the day before midpoint and 16 the day before endpoint (no prizes for guessing what I did).

- Your consultant tutor probably doesn't want to be there and you don't want to be there either so lay down those ground rules early on to save everyone the faff.
- Filter the student choice catalogue by 'flight', 'abroad', and 'expensed'!

Intercalation aka *Beer Year*

- Think about the most beer you've ever drunk. Double it. Double it again. Congratulations, you have planned your intercalation.
- Depends on the course but I didn't realise until christmas that in most courses you don't have to get 80% attendance (unless there's visa requirements, of course). You can literally not go to lectures and seminars and nobody gives two shits.
- Intercalation may be the only opportunity you have to be a non-medical student, so go crazy and do all the things medical students can't (like be in bed past 8am on a Tuesday).
- Branch out and meet people who aren't medics - you will meet some fantastic people this year!

4th Year aka *Shit gets Real part 2: Shit gets Real-er*

- Don't panic! You'll pass your exams with quality revision, doesn't have to be high quantity. I never ever revised past 6pm and passed all the exams just fine :)
- The best way to get yourself to actually go to ward rounds in CMOP is to make a buddy early on and hold each other accountable, otherwise the pull to stay in bed is too strong to resist.
- Do not do the 9-5 that CMOP at the BRI tell you to do. Get good at lying. DON'T GO IN (hypothetically) (not based on any true experience).
- Don't give up your hobbies and social life just because you have exams at the end of the year. Those are what will keep you sane, and what will carry you through to the end.
- Top Tip: orthopaedics is not the same as paediatrics. if you learn this before your fourth year of medicine you're already doing better than me xx

5th Year aka *F1 cosplay*

- Think of this year as a love letter to Bristol and all the friends you've made. You're the writer and this year can be whatever you make of it.
- Take the opportunity to fall in love with Bristol all over again after your long summer and elective - go to those food spots and restaurants and bars and venues you were recommended over the past 5 or 6 years.
- Stay on top of your sign-offs, especially CAPs as you don't want to condense all of it into 3 days of stress at the very end.
- Use this year to explore different specialties, get better at that cannula or scrub into theatres, whatever piques your interest.
- Don't be afraid to do your elective solo - yes it's great to go with friends, but this is a rare opportunity to explore anywhere in the world and do anything - don't compromise (some compromises may be necessary)!

Note from the editor: The Black Bag offers a quick path to good grades and a healthy social life in exchange for blood sacrifice or writing an article for us – whichever is more convenient.

Credit to:
Charlotte W
Molly P
Mohamed A
Tushar Rakhecha
Will P
Rodas Hawrami

United Bristol Hospitals RFC 2024-25 Season

Review

2024/25, what a season. There's a lot to unpack from the past year at UBHRFC, so let's get straight into it. The first term kicked off with a bang at Freshers' Fair, recruiting the finest students to join the finest club in the land. As usual we were inundated with new students, bringing plenty of fresh talent and character but also the challenge of welcoming them into the club as quickly as possible and bringing them up to speed. With so many personnel changes year-on-year, it's never easy - but in typical UBH style, they were integrated swiftly. We also welcomed Lee to the coaching team, who provided invaluable insight, particularly for the forward pack.

Then it was time to face the music...

Our first real test of passing (sometimes successfully) and running against opposition came in the pre-season friendly against Nottingham Medics RFC. We eased past them, scoring over 50 points and displaying some fantastic rugby. We then stayed in Nottingham for the night, and demonstrated we were also the stronger team off the pitch. A very successful start.

Then came the NAMS group stage; NAMS is our national medics competition, with the 1s placed in a group with Southampton, Swansea, Cardiff, and Peninsula (Plymouth & Exeter). We started off the group stage strong, with winning performances against Southampton and Swansea.

Then, on a very, very rainy day in Cardiff, came Varsity. Varsity is always the highlight of my year, with all medics' sports coming together for one hell of a day. Unfortunately, due to our lack of experience in underwater rugby, we fell short against Cardiff. Still, it was a hard-fought game, a brilliant atmosphere, and a clear reminder of areas to work on. We did, however, find redemption with a textbook Varsity night out afterwards. Our final group stage game against Peninsula also ended in defeat, giving us the wake-up call we needed heading into the knockouts.

The 2s, unsurprisingly, also enjoyed a successful group stage and progressed into the NAMS knockouts. The 2s swiftly brushed past Warwick and Brighton, before putting in a gritty display against Cardiff in Varsity, falling just short in a 7-5 loss. Plenty of promise for the knockouts. The 2s also competed in a series of intramural friendlies, beating the likes of TUBES (Bristol Engineers) on numerous occasions despite their unwavering confidence.

Then came the knockouts. The 1s faced Peninsula in the quarter-final, determined to right some wrongs. We delivered a classic UBH clinic, dispatching them on their home soil and booking a semi-final spot. The 2s, meanwhile, put on a show against Sheffield at Fortress Dingle, also marching on into the semis.

Knowing a home fixture would be too easy for our teams, the NAMS board decided to seed us away for both semi finals. The 1s returned to Cardiff and battled through an agonisingly close game, losing 20-19, a heartbreaking end to the NAMS campaign. A lot to look back on and a lot of promise for next year. The 2s, in typical fashion, gritted their teeth and put on a magical, hardy 7-5 victory over Nottingham. They marched into the final full of confidence, leaving the spectators with a considerably shortened life expectancy.

The mighty 2s then faced a much-changed (and suspiciously strengthened) Warwick side in the NAMS final at Grasshoppers RFC. It was one hell of a game, highlighted by one Warwick player deciding that two yellow cards might help his team win (it in fact did not). The mighty 2s showcased a year's worth of work on passing and tackling, dispatching Warwick 25-17 and WINNING THE NAMS CUP.

After the NAMS season, our annual exchange with Nantes Medical School continued, with the French making the trip to Bristol for what was, naturally, a very sensible and quiet weekend. As always, they taught us some useful French vocabulary, and reminded us how much more fun we are than them.

We also welcomed our club alumni back to Bristol for our annual Old Boys event, sitting down for a meal with the legends of the club. They shared their stories from actual adulthood, and we reminded them just how dangerously far we are from that stage of life. It's a brilliant opportunity to see the legacy of UBHRFC and the standards we're expected to uphold, both on and off the pitch.

Finally came the hardest part of the year: saying goodbye to far too many members of the club. It's always a reminder of how precious our time at university is, and of the constant challenge of rebuilding with each new season.

With Lee stepping up from forwards coach to head coach, major changes in the leadership team, and a dream of bringing all three pieces of silverware back to Bristol (1s, 2s, and the Women's Cup), the future looks very bright for UBHRFC.

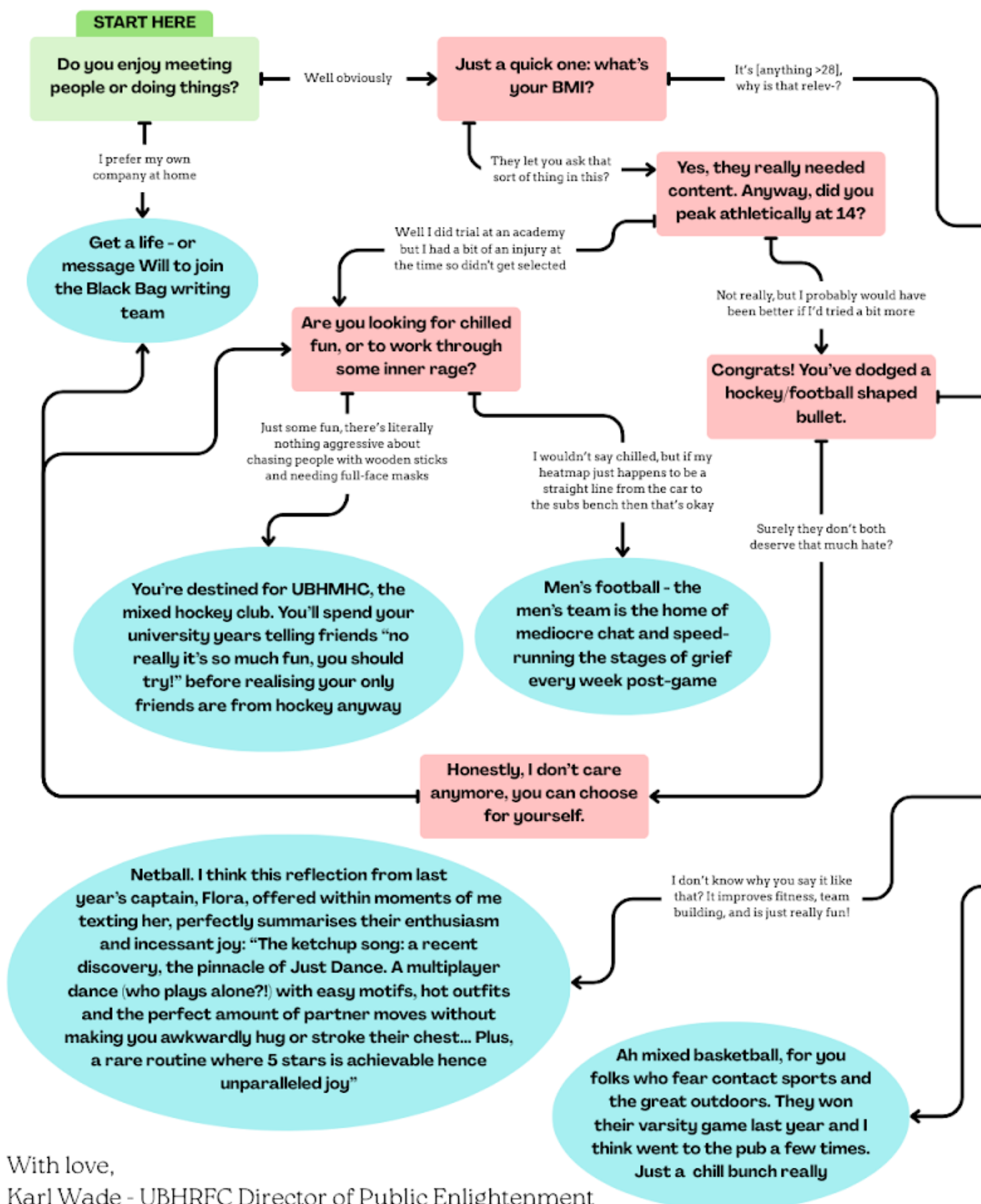
A huge thank you to our coaching staff - Mike, Lee, and Ryley - for giving up their time week in, week out, to help us secure yet another piece of silverware.

Viva la cloob.

Oliver Davey
UBHRFC 1XV Captain



A Diagnostic Tool for Choosing your Medic Sports Club at Bristol



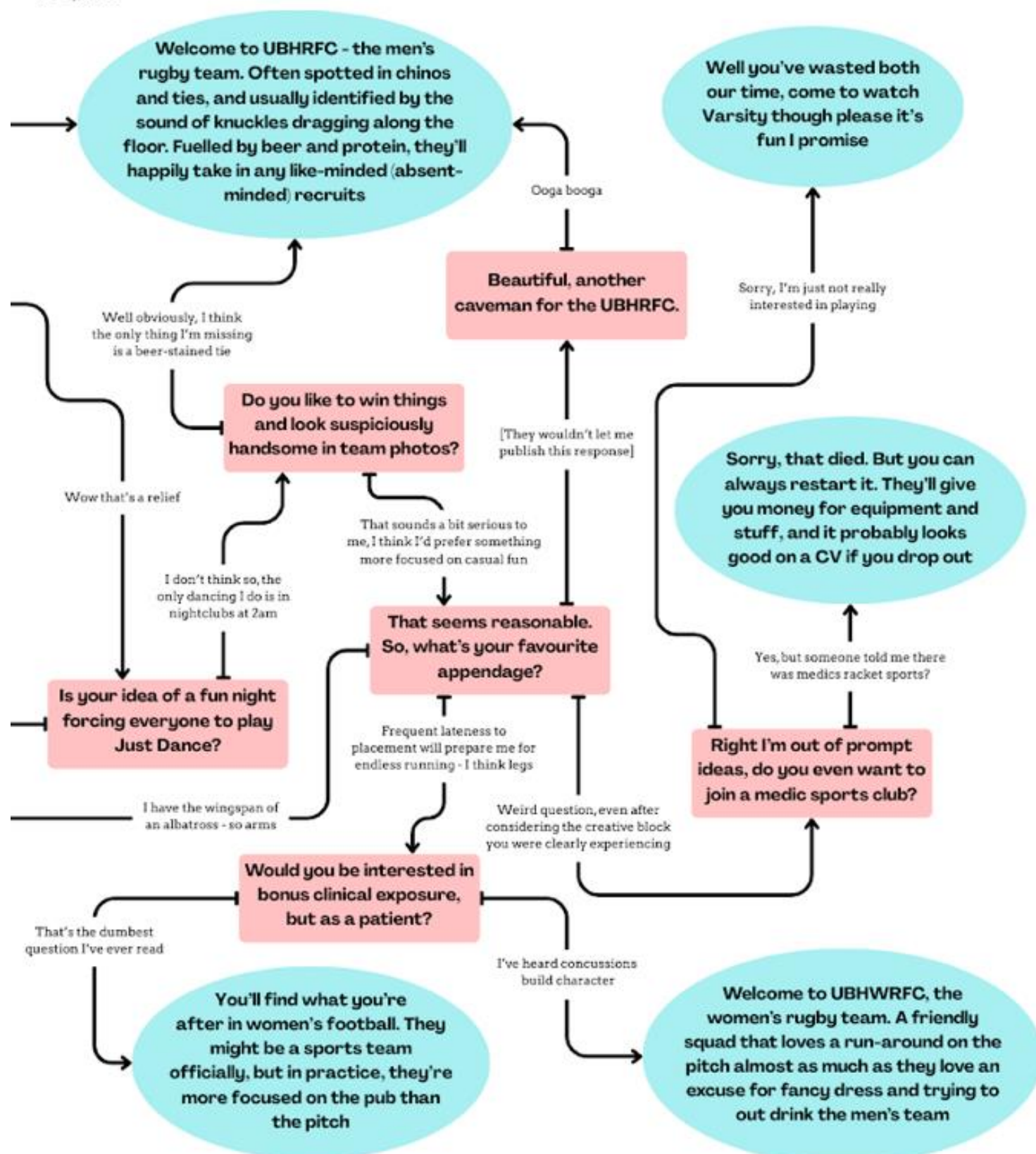
With love,
Karl Wade - UBHRFC Director of Public Enlightenment

Abstract:

Joining one of these teams is a great way to keep active, find medic friends, steal study resources, and just have lots of fun. Please use this flowchart to assist you in your decision making. They all have a slightly different vibe - for example, netball are peppy (see bottom left), rugby is fun, hockey is not. If any of this comes across as an attack on specific clubs, then I'm glad the blatant propaganda comes across clearly.

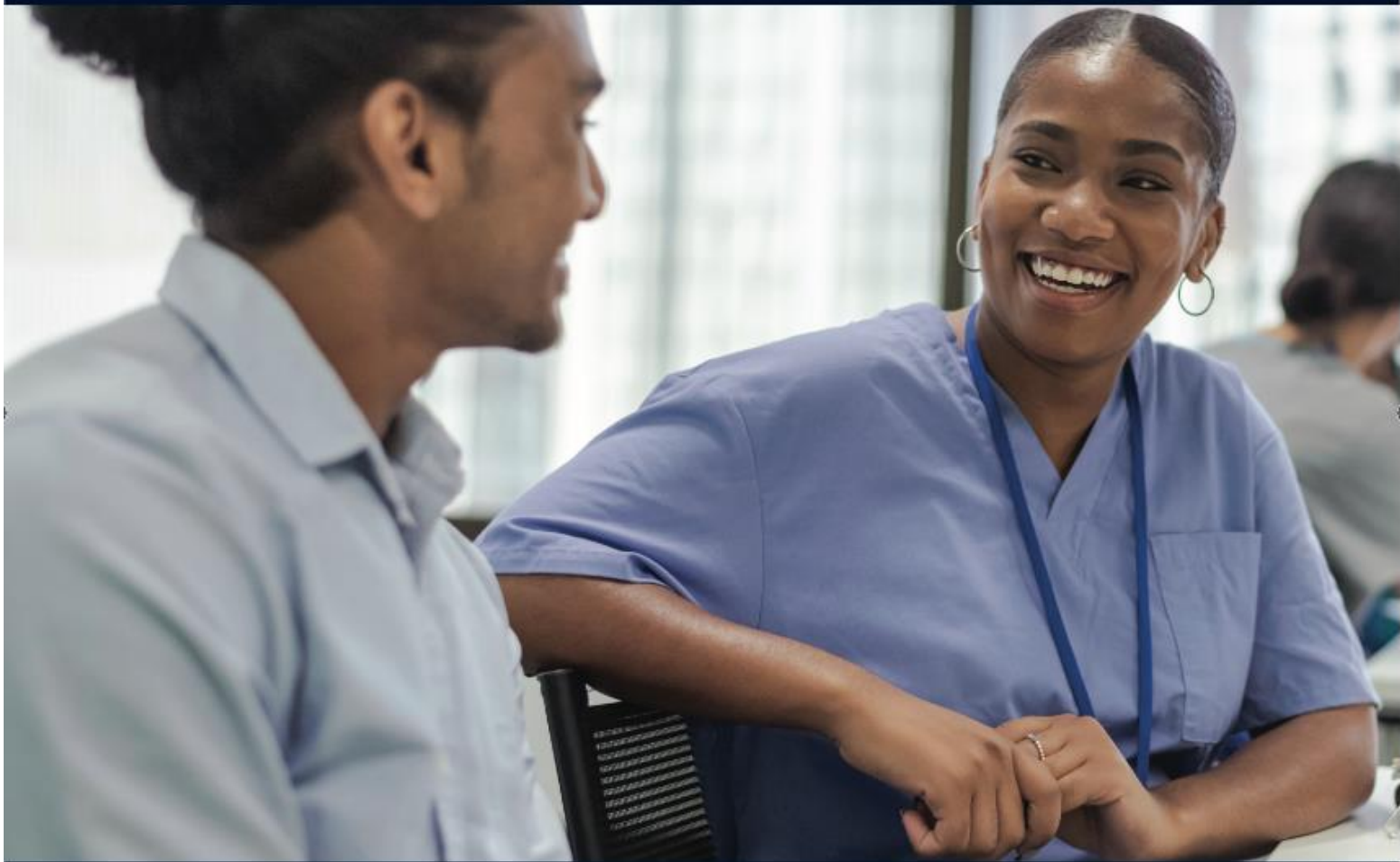
Conflicts of interest:

Yes, lots



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CLICENDALES

dancing with the stars

Following an intense session of statistical analysis and diligently combing through the audience reviews, this is the summary of Clic 2025 ~ Anon.

Burlesque (non-strip) - Average audience rating: 3/10

Comment: "It's like going to the ward and not getting anything signed off... sure, you can do what you want, but *what the fuck is the point?*" - WS, 3rd Year, MyProgress cunt.

Katy Perry (PreClin) - Average audience rating: 6/10

Comment: "Some of the fresh are actually rather fit" - JS, 4th Year, Shark.

Grannies - Average audience rating: 8/10

Comment: "Something about the CMOP of it all... brings a tear to the eye" - SH, 4th Year, struggling.

Abba - Average audience rating: 7/10

Comment: "Great outfits, weird mixing on the tunes... but overall? A sound performance and some great arses on show. Would watch again." - JH, Intercalator from Kent & Medway Medical School.

Barbie - Average audience rating: 9/10

Comment: "Hi Barbie!" - Barbie, PhD Global Health.

Lady Gaga - Average audience rating: 6/10

Comment: "GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGAAAAAAAAAAAA" - 4th Year, white-girl-wasted.

Fireboy and Watergirl - Average audience rating: 8/10

Comment: "Had me fired up and dripping wet all at once. Mission accomplished?" - JF, Senior faculty member.

Anthony Joshua - Average audience rating: 9/10

Comment: "You can take your gloved fist and stick it up me any day" - JF, Senior faculty member.

Beyonce - Average audience rating: 10/10

Comment: "Thank you Beyonce" - Everyone in attendance.

Steve Jobs - Average audience rating: 4/10

Comment: "We must stop glorifying the American capitalist illusion. Fuck this shit! I'm going back to the ancestral plane." - ZH, 5th Year

Note from the editor: Unfortunately, we have had to refrain from publishing photos of Clic to uphold our reputation as a highly respectable magazine.

Stay tuned for next issue though, where we'll be ranking lecturers by sex appeal.

Boys Panto - Average audience rating: 6/10

Comment: "Matt Kaminer's toned abs, slick moves and cool backflip had me captivated. What a hottie!" - MK, 3rd Year.

Lewis Hamilton - Average audience rating: 9/10

Comment: "Vroom vroom! This shit got me all fired up! Rock hard throughout!" LM, animated car from the popular Disney/Pixar franchise, *Cars*.

Fireman Sam - Average audience rating: 9/10

Comment: "Would've been a ten had I been able to see just a *little* bit of cock. Is that too much to ask? At a *strip show*? I mean seriously." - MG, Galenicals President.

*Huge congratulations to Clic for raising an insane £67,078.35 for Young Lives vs Cancer last year. That brings their running total up to more than **HALF A MILLION POUNDS**. A crazy amount to raise, massive well done to everyone involved. Really excited to see how much can be raised this year!*

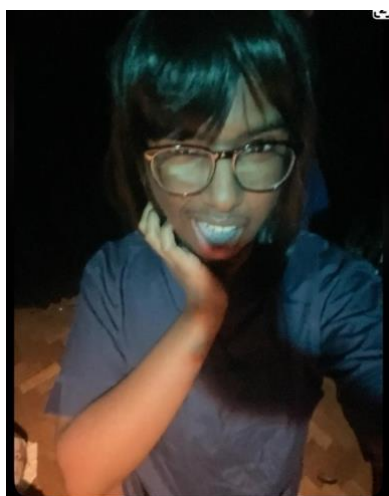
An Off-Piste Informational Parable to life at Bristol

Hello! Congratulations are, of course, in order as you are entering or probably at the time that this has come out, have already entered the snowy white peaks that are the University of Bristol Medical School (there are many hills, although I am sure that you were aware of that because unlike some of us you lucky bastards got in-person open days - I'm not bitter at all). BTW, this will not be a 'simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson'. I just didn't want to get in trouble for doing a spoof of the sponsored content. (I also googled a word that could be used and copy-pasted the definition)

If you are anything like me, you're probably thinking, did I put the wrong code on UCAS or have I made a wrong turn and signed myself up to a cult? It is no secret that at every 2nd left within a 2-mile radius of university accommodation, you will hear an errant 'rah' or some other kind of culture shock that no amount of golf, polo, or any other kind of upper-middle-class cultural capital crash course could have prepared you for.

First term (aka TB1 for some reason) was a big shock, however, things will always get more shocking as they tend to with longer stretches of time spent around both posh and white people. You will quickly become accustomed to all flavours of pop and pop-adjacent music as well as tales of gap-yahs past as you endeavour on more nights out. Nodding and skanking will go a long way; you are free to experiment with where you choose to do either of these options.

If you are of the financial means, please invest in a chiropractor! You will hear statements that rock your centre of gravity - my personal favourite was "moisturising your whole body is expensive". If they're not making you query the price of moisturiser, you will most likely query the actual delectability of your food as you are cooking with a background of a cacophony of 'yum - what are you cooking?' as you wash rice. Equally - you will wonder how people afford the sheer amount of takeaways and nights out. This being said - there are always benefits; a pesky UTI knows no bounds for your friend's parent who is a GP partner in the Cotswolds.



Finally, life at Bristol will be a collection of struggle meals, checking urban dictionary for what 'chopping a pint' means and actually realising that people do ski and ski often. You will also spend your time wondering how long you can keep a hairstyle going but you will do it amongst some of the best and brightest minds. It may feel lonely but truly you will never be alone. Being working class and or a person of colour at Bristol (if it wasn't obvious these are the groups of people this piece is aimed to), can be incredibly confusing but the city at large is diverse and you will find friendships built in love, kindness, and compassion amongst the entire student cohort. Plus there is always a braider or a barber who can do your hair or halal meat somewhere.

Mohamed Aidid

Interview with the President of Galenicals: Joseph Phillips

Disclaimer: The Black Bag has been given full artistic liberties over the words of the president, if the following results in a fitness to practice then on his head be it.

What's the best bit about being president?

Uhhhhhhh it definitely is the power, or is that a bad political stand point? Maybe don't write that. Probably the power and having David Rogers' phone number.

Take us through your 10 year plan for galenicals.

Is this the Chinese Communist Party? What is my 10 year plan? That is a very good question. My personal goals are to take supreme power, never have to face the real world and become a doctor, and to spit in Wes Streeting's face. Also to make jacket potatoes free in all hospital canteens.

Word on the street is that you're actually a Plymouth student sent to infiltrate and destroy us, what do you have to say against these allegations?

Um don't be silly! I didn't get 1000 on my UCAT, Plymouth is a shit med school and I would never be affiliated with them.

What would you say to someone thinking of taking up your mantle next year?

DON'T. Don't listen to your friend who thinks you were 'made for this role', you will regret it with every inch of your being. You'll wake up every morning thinking of Andrew Blythe. I think I may have PTSD. I can't stop thinking about how I will manage freshers and all my minions.

Are you only saying that to discourage opposition when you run for a second term?

Joe refused to answer this question.

What advice do you have for the incoming freshers?

Ummmmmm go to all your lectures apart from PPD and SAFETI systems. Have lunch at Chaya. Don't be a north village rah girly. And don't shag any of them. Buy your Galenicals membership. Don't get caught selling ketamine and breaking statues at the Winter Ball.

I think that was all quite ridiculous and is going to reflect on me really badly - do the staff read it?

Charlotte W



President Joe, thrilled to be leaving Taunton

Medic pick-up lines

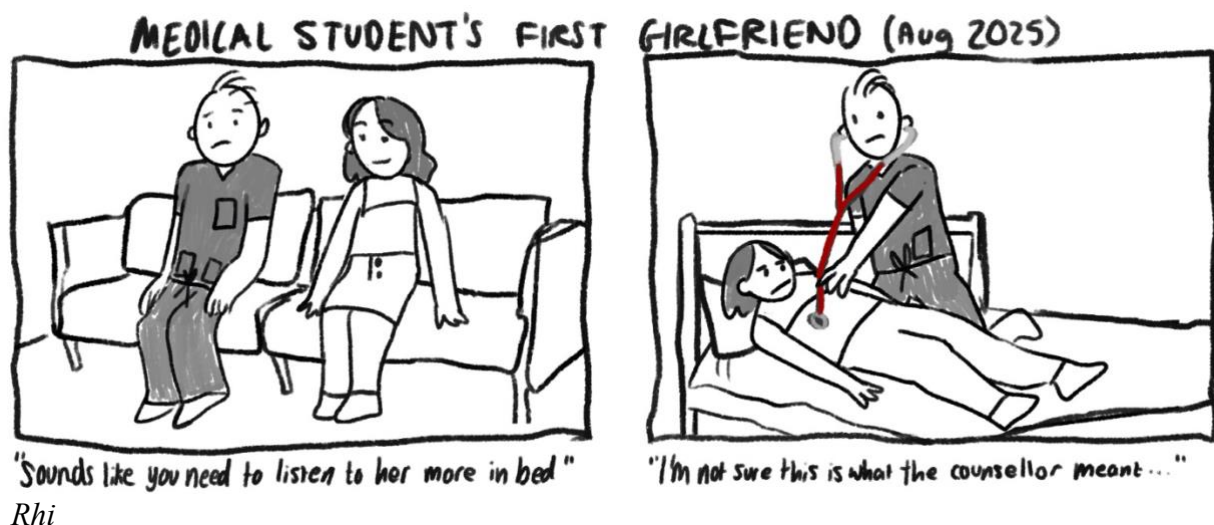
The team here at Black Bag are well versed in romance (obviously), so if you're finding yourself going home alone after medic events, don't you worry, it's not your fault. We've all been there before. Armed with these pick-up lines and some unearned confidence, you'll be irresistible:

1. Are you a pulmonary function test? Because whenever you're around, my heart starts racing and I'm left breathless.
2. Are you La Rocca? Because I'd wait hours to get into you.
3. Is your name Crohn? Because you've got me feeling a mix of butterflies in my stomach.
4. Your smile must be a defib because it brings me back to life
5. I wonder if you can help me? I seem to be suffering from a lack of Vitamin U.
6. Are you Banksy? Because I can't wait to create some art with you.
7. You are so sweet that even my GLUT 2 transporters are at Vmax.
8. Are you the optic chiasm? Because you turned my world around.
9. Can I call you pia mater? Because you're always on my mind.
10. Are you turbo island? Because you're the light of my life.
11. Are you Mobitz II? Because you make my heart skip a beat
12. Can I take your temperature? Because you're looking hot today
13. I'm not organ donor, but I'd be happy to give you my heart.
14. I get tachycardic when speaking to you.

At the end of the day if you're still down on your luck then maybe it's time to call it quits and become a radiologist.

Alba Jassem

A note from the editor: The Black Bag does not take any responsibility for any negative outcomes from the use of the above pick-up lines. However, if you see positive results, you owe us £5.



Horoscopes by specialty

The stars called. They're holding for a consult.

Whether you wear a snazzy stethoscope, are delicate with a syringe, a pro at spreadsheets, or trusted with the holy scalp, every speciality has its own astrological energy. Curious about what your star sign says about you? How the stars are aligning (or not) for you this month? Here is what the cosmos has in store:

Sarah Hussnain
5th Year Medical Student

CAPRICORN (December 22 – January 19): INTERVENTIONAL RADIOLOGY



Structured, diligent, and the master of darkness and contrast. You see what no one else does, even if no one sees *you* (because you're always hidden away).

🌙 *This week:* Someone will call you “the guy who reads the pictures”. You are the bricks and mortar of the NHS, know that with great power comes great responsibility.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): PSYCHIATRY

Intuitive, intelligent and slightly magical. You are the calm in the chaos. Your ability to hold meaningful conversations and provide reassurance are some of your most powerful attributes. You remember everyone's cat's name, which is a bonus!

🌙 *This week:* Neptune advises rest and recuperation. Take your own advice and adopt some self-care and ‘me’ time this week.



PISCES (February 19 – March 20): FAMILY MEDICINE



From dealing with Grandma's dodgy hip to little Tim's ear infection, you are possibly part-octopus, managing the extremes of one generation to the end of the other. Warm, proactive and conscientious, you are the best organiser and the most likely to be inundated with appointments.

🌙 *This week:* Mercury retrograde can see an appointment clash in the near future. Double booked! Stand with your caffeine, either be prepared for Grandad's bunions or cash in your overdue ‘annual leave’.

ARIES (March 21 – April 19): EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Thrill seekers, you live on the edge — of your seats! Last minute schedule changes, your veins are filled with adrenaline, and you live for the chaos of the ED; you might as well live in the resus bay. You thrive on a mix of your energy, caffeine and protein bars. Everyone asks you how you do it-...‘with charm and boyish good looks!’

🌙 *This week:* Jupiter predicts a generally quiet week. Your relationships look set to suffer due to your 5th date night in a row being disrupted by 11 trauma alerts and a mystery patient.



TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): DERMATOLOGY



Sensitive, calm and a precision like no other, you love your job! Your skin glows so brightly, you have a well-structured nine to four, no one calls and your pager rarely goes off, it might even be stuffed in a drawer with dust building on it.

🌙 *This week:* Saturn encourages you to remember that benzyl peroxide is life and SPF50 is a must!

GEMINI (May 21 – June 21): NEUROSURGERY

No one knows their neuroanatomy like you do—from your amygdala and thalamus to the ascending and descending pathways! Inquisitive, sharp and fast talking, you're 50% genius and 50% caffeine. Your secret is a little jazz music to get you through all of your operations for the day!

🧠 *This week:* Not everything is a prefrontal cortex issue, although your enthusiasm is admired.



CANCER (June 22 – July 22): PAEDIATRICS

That's what you experience on a daily basis, debates about who the best character from 'Wicked' is, all while you diagnose various infectious diseases! You can turn a glove into a talking animal and a tendon hammer into a drumstick.

🧠 *This week:* Jupiter predicts an influx of coughs and colds (it's the season), be prepared, they will amass in waves.



VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): GERIATRICS

Patient, calm, and humble, you provide the ear for the stories all the patients have to share with you, whilst managing the sixteenth delirious patient of the day! Sometimes you even question if you're the delirious one!

🧠 *This week:* A delirious patient details their holiday with you, whilst fighting an infection, being in a different bay and on a ton of medications... but you still ask for the location.



LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): OPHTHALMOLOGY

Focused, elegant, and able to detect a retinal issue metres away, you're very knowledgeable about everything eye, from the best eye drops to get that glow to the hours needed to sleep to avoid those eye bags!

🧠 *This week:* The stars suggest a rather calm week. Until someone says, "just a red eye". Then it's time to get your skates on!



SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY

Assuring, empathetic, and a professional at getting people to do exactly as you tell them at 2am, whether that be yelling "push" in public or using forceps! You manage hormones, the birth of new life, and two patients at once!

🧠 *This week:* Mercury predicts a full moon, and whilst that probably doesn't mean werewolves, it might mean twins! Be prepared.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 21): ORTHOPAEDICS

Often the most energetic of them all and enthusiasts of all things bone related, when you hear the word fracture, you all practically jump for joy. Your ideal day is challenging your colleagues to push up contests whilst debating which surgical technique is the best for specific fractures. Probably best these aren't done at the same time!

🧠 *This week:* Mars gives you luck, that might mean you're going to either win the weekly pull-up contest or an interesting fracture will present to the wards!



Agony Aunt

Dear Agony Aunt,

I've just moved into Wills Hall. I was so excited to start this new chapter of my life but I'm terrified. I think it might be haunted. I see dead people and I'm not getting any sleep. I hear strange noises in the night and my things get moved about my room. My brand new stethoscope engraved with 'Future World class Doctor' is always going missing. I can't possibly stoop so low to move to a city centre accommodation. Please help me- what do I do?!

*Yours always,
Araminta De' Cushings*

Greetings lady De'Cushings,

I'm afraid you're just going to have to suck it up. If you ever want to live up to that eponymous pedestal of syndrome, disease and triad you're going to have to off a few people along the way. It's probably best you're getting this early exposure of the dead, anatomy Craig would kill to be in your position (seriously be on your guard). A good patient rapport with those departed is an excellent quality to be praised on your TAB report. Perhaps consider holding a seance with some philosophy and ethics students to use as practice sacrifices.

A couple hallucinations and psychotic breaks are a normal part of the initiation into medical school. Think about using this to your advantage. Use all those extra insomnia filled hours to memorise the Krebs's cycle and clotting cascade- essential parts of all doctors' knowledge.

The strange noises you're hearing are probably best left to the imagination. Let's just say that the only thing worse than med-cest in freshers is flat-cest.

Losing your stethoscope is another reality of life as a doctor, suture it to your person, you should have it around your neck at all times. The pub, la roca, lectures- the only way for people to respect you is if you have your stethoscope. You should also loudly announce your medical student status at least once every 15 minutes- I recommend setting a timer.

I do agree, you should definitely avoid the cretins of city centre accommodation. If you can't indulge in the happy dust parties of the north village rah gurlies what's the point in coming to uni? While your predicament does seem to be a blessing in disguise, you could consider using daddy's money to buy yourself a clifton mansion to utilise as your clinical skills study room and second home. I wish you luck in the Bristol housing market.

Sorrows, thoughts and prayers,
Agony Aunt

Dear Agony Aunt,

I am just going into my 2nd year of medical school and I am afraid that the medcest is beginning. Some of my friends have slowly started dating medics, and people have made up all sorts of rumours: that a couple has done things in the La Rocca toilets, that a girl in the

year above was seeing two guys in the year below her at the same time, and multiple people are being accused of cheating.

I have crushes on a few people on the course but I'm scared to make any moves due to potential gossip. But I'm also sick of being lonely.

*Yours,
Dee Preshon*

Dearest Dee Preshon,

Medcest is like OSCE examiners — you know you shouldn't, but sometimes temptation is simply too strong. It's not really a question of *if* you'll dabble, but *when*. The trick is to do it with enough flair that people gossip about you with admiration, not pity.

First, sharking freshers is off-limits. Second years fishing in the kiddie pool is as tragic as a final year still bringing their stethoscope to the pub. By third year, however, you're entitled to a bit of cougar chic and can go a year below if needed.

If you must engage, never date within your own CBL group. It's like dating your own sibling, except with worse small talk and shared anatomy lab memories. Always aim at least one year up or down. That way, when it inevitably combusts, you can both avoid awkward eye contact in the biomedical library and just hope that you don't end up on the same placements.

Remember: medcest isn't just about romance — it's career networking. Dating a medic guarantees you a partner who'll also be too busy, too tired, and too emotionally unavailable to notice your flaws. That's true love. Extra points if they're one of the popular and attractive people in the sports societies. Even more extra points if their parents are consultants in your desired specialty.

So be bold, Dee. Loneliness is temporary. Gossip is forever, but at least it gives you legacy. If you're going to ruin your reputation, do it with the same confidence you'll one day use to

Sorrows, thoughts and prayers,
Agony Aunt



If you have a problem you'd like the Agony Aunts to help with, please send it in using the QR code below Instagram bio xx



Aunts Agony:
Wiktorja Kotynska & Charlotte Wood



Crossword

Credit to:

Alba Jassem

5th Year Medical

Student

ACROSS

3. The true luxury of a medical student's accommodation, often mistaken for a hazard. (5)

4. The true cardio workout for any Bristol student, often encountered multiple times a day. (5)

6. The "deluxe" meal often found at 3 AM during a night shift (6)

7. What happens to most friend groups by final year? (6,2)

8. The essential skill you master during surgery, involving very little actual surgery. (10)

9. The amount of money you have left for food by the end of term (4)

DOWN

1. A mythical creature often sighted during exam season, said to grant extra revision hours. (6,6)

2. The actual primary purpose of The Black Bag ;) (6)

5. What you're actually doing when you're telling people you're developing 'independence and resilience' by yourself in Yeovil? (9)

We will be publishing the answers on our Instagram and TikTok, so make sure to follow us there to find out how you did!

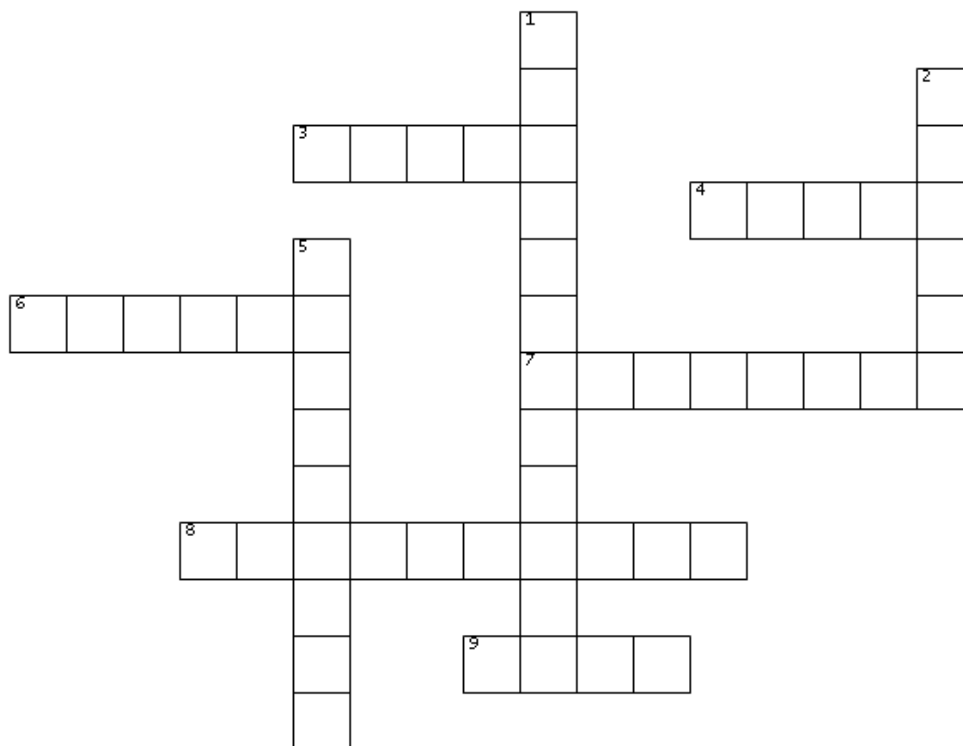
LEO (July 23 – August 22): PLASTIC SURGERY



Precise, skilful and all with confidence, you are the pinnacle of patient centred care. Whether it's treating burns or aesthetic advice, you provide the honesty and patience everyone needs. You appreciate the finer art of medicine!

🌙 *This week:* Mercury foresees a new challenge, you will be inundated with referrals for Botox - think carefully about your response with a smile and an invoice.

Note from the editor: The lion-eyed amongst you will have noticed that unforeseen circumstance and unpredictable tragedy caused an editing mistake (no fault of my own) which meant that the Leo horoscope was not included in the print version. It's been tacked on the end here because it didn't fit on the double, and I hate Leos. Stuff that in your big ego and smoke it.



What's next for the Black Bag?

Well gang, that's it for another issue of the Black Bag. If it doesn't feel different to last year then try reading it again, asking a friend what they thought, or referring yourself for a CT head due to the critical occipital lobe symptom of "déjà vu".

You're probably left feeling slightly blue, rather hollow, and a bit hungry (not unlike a patient with CHF waking up from a nephrectomy) but fear not(!) there's plenty more Black Bag to experience before Christmas (Aka. The next issue).

As mentioned several times already this issue, our social media has lots to keep updated with, from competitions to article drops to overly personal questions, it is *the* best place to follow all the med school goings on, or to just have a giggle.

If you've developed a crush on any of our writers, feel free to stalk them all the way to the **Black Bag Publishing Party**, which will be happening October 10th at an undisclosed location – check social media for the details!

(Please don't actually stalk anyone)

Remember that if there was anything in this issue that you disagree with then it was satire, and if you do agree then it wasn't. Also nothing in here constitutes medical advice (except for the bit where we said have friends and keep your grades up).

If you think you could do it better, then get involved via the WhatsApp (you can join through a link in our bio on Instagram). We will be releasing our next issue in early December, so write/draw/ChatGPT something before then.

What's already been for the Black Bag?

Did you really think we would forget to include a 'From the Archives'?

The below notice comes from the 1953 Spring Issue, which (as discovered thanks to the inquiries of Dr Mike Cadogan from LITFL) was dedicated almost entirely to Dr A. F. S. Kent, renowned for the eponymous Bundle of Kent, who was once a Professor of Physiology at Bristol. But rather than doing something interesting and medical, let's do what most of us do in Winter Lectures: plan a holiday somewhere sunny. Personally, I think Galenicals should bring back free holidays in France, but maybe that's just me...

B.M.S.A. NEWS

Holiday in France: If you would like a holiday in France this year, arrangements can be made for you to stay as the guests of doctors in Lille. You will be accommodated free of charge and have an opportunity of seeing general practice in France as well as the new medical school in Lille, which is the most modern in France. You will be quite free to do as you choose—Paris is within easy reach—and the medical students will be pleased to entertain you. It is advisable that you should know a little French, though this is not essential. The only cost to you will be the train fare (and boat fare). There's no catch—the invitation is a genuine one—and if you would like to go, contact your Galenicals or B.M.S.A. representative NOW, because the arrangements will take time to make. Early July is the time suggested by the Lille organizer, but if this is inconvenient it may be possible to arrange a different time if you apply early.



THE BLACK BAG.

Bristol Medical School Student Magazine

EST. 1937

Thanks for reading, see ya round!

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- And more!
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