

The Final Tapestry



Text by Christic Moral

Christic is a second-year medical student at King's College London and is the Editor of the 31st SMSUK executive committee.



As the end of the year slowly comes into sight, we often wonder how time seems to be so fleeting. It feels like it was mere moments ago that we were finding our footing amid everything new, with a myriad of encounters waiting to shape us. Like the threads on a loom slowly taking shape and revealing their

picture, we begin to mould our identity, strengthening our resolve for what comes ahead. The challenges that come will call our progress into question and test our dedication. Even with everything we have learnt, it is natural that uncertainty about the future persists. As I reflect on these thoughts, the lyrics of Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide" come to mind:

Can I sail through the changin' ocean tides?

Can I handle the seasons of my life?

As spring approaches and flowers begin to bloom, we too begin to show the fruits of our growth. Alongside our personal growth, our community continues to create moments of connection, offering both support and space for us to flourish, reminding us that growth can also come

through other means. Our weekend trips to Tenerife and Vienna gave members a much-needed time to rest and enjoy each other's presence. Keeping true to our commitment to learning, we also held our Annual Summit in collaboration with Malaysian Medics International UK and the Hong Kong Medical Society of the UK, offering workshops to both challenge and develop our members' medical knowledge and skills. These experiences, woven into our tapestry, give us a little more certainty, reminding us that we have a community to lean on and a matured sense of purpose. In this edition of Letters from the UK, Carolyn shares with us the strength that she found throughout the year and the resilience that keeps her going.

Text by Carolyn Por

Carolyn is a first-year medical student studying at University College London.



The journey through my first year of medical school in the UK has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life – the excitement, the adrenaline and the deep sense of privilege that comes with studying medicine. Yet there have also been moments of doubt, low mood and exhaustion when the six-year journey ahead feels long and demanding. However, as the saying goes, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." These moments have taught me resilience and reminded me of the strength that emerges through adversity.

When times get difficult, the community around me becomes a powerful source of motivation. I am privileged to have a close group of friends in medical school who understand the pressures and intensity of the course, which helps ward off the sense of isolation. Simple moments, such as sharing meals together, allow us to unwind, ease our stress and support one another. We openly talk about our uncertainties, encourage each other academically and emotionally, and reassure one another, especially before



assessments. I fondly recall a time when a friend offered some words of encouragement, as well as academic help, when I was feeling overwhelmed before a test. To relieve my nerves, she offered to have revision sessions together, where we could check each other's understanding and build on each other's knowledge. This truly helped me consolidate my learning and, more importantly, feel less alone in facing this challenge. We also uplift each other by looking forward to meaningful moments beyond academics. For example, planning a visit to Winter Wonderland after our first assessment gave us something to look forward to and reminded us to celebrate small milestones. Beyond academics, these friendships provide reassurance and stability, especially since we are far from home. They remind me that university life is not defined solely by academic achievement but also by the meaningful relationships we build along the way. This sense of belonging transforms challenges into opportunities for growth.

When the demands of studying feel overwhelming, what motivates me is the opportunity to grow through challenges. Medicine is demanding, and there are moments when the volume and complexity of material can feel daunting. However, after seeing real patients, I realised that these challenges, significant as they are, pale in comparison to the struggles faced by many patients. With a greater understanding of this profession, I decided to see these challenges as part of the learning process rather than obstacles. Each difficult concept understood and each assessment completed builds my confidence and resilience. Over time, I have learnt to trust that persistence and consistent effort will gradually turn uncertainty into understanding. This growth mindset helps me stay motivated, reminding me that the skills I am developing to overcome challenges will not only be useful in medicine but also in many other aspects of life.

Although I am far from home, the support of my family remains an

unwavering source of strength. Sharing a close bond with them reassures me that I am never alone in this journey. Even from afar, their words of encouragement bring warmth, comfort and renewed motivation. Knowing that they believe in me gives me the strength to continue, even during difficult times.

While there is still a long journey ahead, my experiences in the UK have reassured me that challenges provide opportunities which can shape me into a stronger and more resilient individual. This journey is not only about gaining knowledge but also about growing as a person, creating meaningful memories and ultimately becoming a compassionate and competent healthcare professional. ♦

Legend

1. Enjoying the scenic views after a morning hike up Montana Chayofita in Tenerife
2. SMSUK members gather for a photo at the fountains of the Vienna State Opera
3. Getting ice cream after our first formative examination

Photo: SMSUK



Photo: SMSUK



Photo: Carolyn Por

