Learning through competition

Learning can sometimes be described as repetitive, but for a select group of students at Newcastle University Medicine (NUMed), it is competitive.

Two teams of students from NUMed travelled to UniKL in Kuala Lumpur to take part in the national radiology quiz against teams from 20 universities across the country last September.

After an intensive morning of competition, half the teams were knocked out. More gruelling rounds followed until five teams made it to the final round. Preparation for the quiz from the NUMed team started months beforehand and involved learning over the holidays.

Senior clinical lecturer in radiology and co-ordinator of Rad Quiz 2017 Dr Subramaniamy Vasanth Priya, together with clinical teaching fellow and registrar in radiology Dr Alexander Gillespie sent an e-mail to students in their final two years, inviting them to be a part of the NUMed team. The response was overwhelming.

Dr Subramaniamy said: “We saw this as a good educational opportunity for the students, so we offered it to all Stage 4 and 5 students; we were amazed and delighted by the number of students who wanted to participate.”

Dr Subramaniamy invited all interested students to register for a total of eight sessions on interactive radiology lectures.

After a few weeks, a test was set, and based on the results two teams were picked to represent NUMed at the competition.

“As a lecturer, it was warming to see messages of thanks from students who did not make the team,” said Dr Subramaniamy.

“They said it had helped them understand more about radiology and would prove useful for their medical careers.”

Once the two teams were selected, it was time to prepare for the next stage. As the competition date was at the beginning of term, the teams had to prepare during the holidays.

Fourth-year medical student Tan Zhi Jing Tan commented: “We revised and learnt in an incredibly fun way.”

Tan said they were provided online resources, but the real highlight was the professors setting up a WhatsApp group.

“Our professors would send us pictures of X-rays, radiographs and other imagery, and taught us via WhatsApp.”

“I felt it was particularly rewarding as I was acquiring all this knowledge during the holidays and in a casual manner.”

The teams performed well with one of the NUMed teams getting through four rounds to make it to the finals.

“The reason we got to the final round was because of the guidance from our professors and the hard work we put in. It also helped us get a head start on the topic for our final year,” said Tan.

Dr Subramaniamy added: “The competition and the preparation for it helped the students develop important skills that will assist them to become great doctors.”

NUMed is known for its hands-on practical teaching and helping students develop skills outside their core set of skills.

There is a real focus on delivering a rounded education and this means developing the technical, practical and communication skills students require to get to the top in their future careers.

NUMed was established as an international branch campus in Malaysia to offer undergraduate degrees in Medicine (MBBS) and Biomedical Sciences (BSc) for parent institutions Newcastle University, UK.

Both programmes offer opportunities for periods of study in the United Kingdom.

A one-year Foundation Certificate in Biological and Biomedical Sciences is also available, leading to MBBS or BSc (Hons) Biomedical Sciences programmes.

All programmes of study are equivalent to those offered in Newcastle University, UK, and lead to the award of the same degree.

By choosing to study at NUMed Malaysia, students will obtain a reputable UK qualification from an internationally recognised university at a cost significantly lower than that of studying in the UK.

■ For details, look out for the advertisement in this StarSpecial.