



COMMENTARY

Students' Society for Anaesthesiology and Traumatology



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1. Introduction

Membership of medical student societies can be an opportunity for medical students to learn more about their field of interest. Participation and involvement in these societies may even increase the chances of entering a desired residency program. Some medical student societies have international perspectives, others national, but most focus on the education of medical students in a broader perspective, politics, humanitarian work, exchange programs and networking. Within anesthesiology, medical associations such as the American Society for Anesthesiologists and Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research often have students' programs and groups. These groups primarily focus on career opportunities and provide clinical electives and research opportunities. At many universities throughout the world student run groups and organizations are found. Many focus on providing educational opportunities in form of clinical electives. Some, such as the Norwegian emergency medicine societies located in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø are similar to the structure we have in Denmark where simulation courses and workshops are some of the main activities.¹

At the faculty of health and medical sciences at the University of Copenhagen (UCPH) there are numerous students' societies all representing different specialties within medicine, surgery and education.²

Students' Society for Anaesthesiology and Traumatology (SATS) in Copenhagen is one out of three SATS organizations in Denmark.^{3–5} The organizations are individual and locally controlled student societies for medical students interested in a career in anesthesiology, traumatology or emergency medicine. The society aims to introduce the specialty of anesthesiology to all medical students through events such as lectures, workshops, and simulation courses.

The Society was established in Copenhagen in 1999 and SATS Copenhagen (SATS-C) was the first SATS organization in Denmark. In 2000, SATS-C supported the establishment of SATS at the University of Southern Denmark and the University of Aarhus and the society is thereby present at 3 out of 4 medical schools in Denmark.

The society is a student run organization with a board selected by the members at the annual general assembly. In Copenhagen the

board consists of seven board members who coordinate the organization's internal and external activities.

2. Student societies and medical school

Lately there has been an increase in the uptake of students at the Danish medical schools. The increasing number of students, along with a recent implemented five-year time limit in the selection and application for a residency program in Denmark, has made the process of selecting a specialty early in the career more important. This has led to the establishment of many new students' societies at UCPH. The societies present most of the specialties to the students, who are curious, what specialty they wish to pursue. Many of these new societies, upon request from their members, also take on the task of educating their members within their respective specialties through lectures, workshops and courses.²

In most parts of the world, medical school is divided into two parts. The first part, where the acquisition of theoretical knowledge is emphasized and a second part, where the theoretical knowledge is translated and applied in clinical rotations. This is also the case in Denmark, where medical school consists of 12 semesters, with a semester defined as 21 weeks of educational activities including the exam periods.

In Denmark junior doctors report that they feel sufficient in theoretical knowledge, but not in technical skills and that the transition from student to junior doctor can be difficult.⁶ This can be a problem, as many Danish students are far from stakeholder's expectations when they graduate from medical school.⁷

The educational activities within the societies at UCPH often arise from a desire from medical students to gain more hands on experience than is provided by the current medical school curriculum and transition from medical student to junior doctor may be eased by the use of medical simulation training as presented by SATS-C.⁸

When it comes to the recruitment into specialties many junior doctors report that the presentation and contact with a specialty as medical students highly influences their choice of specialty.⁹ Therefore, SATS-C may also play a significant role in the recruitment of future anesthesiologists in Denmark.¹⁰

3. Members

Currently SATS-C has a total of 226 members developing from 182 in 2010, 192 in 2011, 248 in 2012, and 298 in 2013. Years,

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presenting large-scale events usually generate more members, as these activities require membership. A total of 298 members gave SATS a total of 7.9% of the 3769 enrolled medical students at UCPH in 2013.

The members in SATS-C range from all semesters and the practical courses are their primary motivation for membership.²

4. Activities in SATS-C

In SATS-C, monthly meetings are held throughout the semesters. At these meetings short lectures and workshops are presented for the members along with planning and coordination of future activities. The members also have the opportunity to present their research, travel or conference experiences, and teach practical skills to fellow students.

Along with the monthly meetings an average of three lectures related to topics in anesthesiology, traumatology, and emergency medicine are presented each semester. Lectures are usually open to both members and non-members and the subjects of the lectures are decided upon the monthly meetings.

In supplement to the open lectures, field trips to the capital region's level 1 Trauma Center are organized as recurring events. At these events, visits at the helipad and the emergency room, and lectures on pre-hospital emergency services such as the helicopter service and the ambulance service, are presented.

In addition to lectures, SATS-C provides the students with the opportunity to practice technical skills through seven different workshops organized one to four times per year. Many of the workshops include training in basic technical skills relevant for doctors in many specialties and basic acute care algorithms. Other courses and workshops are based upon the members aspiring interests within the society's covered specialties. These workshops present typical tasks from anesthesiology such as airway management and ultrasound. These workshops may serve as an early introduction and a method of early repetitive training in advanced procedures.

Fig. 1 shows a picture from the workshop in acute pediatric procedures.

All courses and workshops are organized and coordinated by SATS-C members, supported by the board. Students are responsible for applications for grants and funding, and all other activities

related to the organization of the event including selling tickets, booking of venues and contacting instructors. The motivation for being actively involved in the organization of events is usually the opportunity to network with educators, expand network within specific subspecialties, and gain research opportunities within the field. Moreover, a genuine interest to be involved in the society to gain insight in their field of interest is a motivating factor for many members.

Doctors with experience from anesthesiology, emergency medicine, and/or trauma surgery conduct the workshops. All instructors are experienced in educating students either from clinical rotations and/or from medical simulation courses. For the workshops a curriculum is described and instructors teach the students using the Walker and Peyton's four-step approach to contribute to successful learning.¹¹ All courses are evaluated and for many of the courses research in teaching methods and student's abilities to translate theory into practice are ongoing.

Table 1 shows a summary of SATS-C's current workshop and simulation course curriculum.

Over the years, SATS-C has built a close relation with the Danish Institute for Medical Simulation (DIMS) where bigger workshops and simulation courses are conducted. At least one simulation course in emergency medicine is presented every semester. This course accepts a total of 24 participants, mainly from the final semesters of medical school. For two days the participants undergo a total of 14 medium fidelity simulation training scenarios in emergency medicine, emergency surgery and the advanced life support (ALS) algorithm. Non-technical skills are trained including situational awareness, teamwork, task management, and decision-making and all scenarios are followed by debriefing.⁸ This course has inspired SATS-C to develop and host the first International Summer School in Emergency Medicine in Denmark in July 2015.

Fig. 2 shows a picture from the course in emergency medicine.

The cadaver courses are some of our most popular courses and provide a unique training opportunity for our members. These courses are executed in collaboration with the Department of Cellular and Molecular Sciences at UCPH who generously donate the use of the cadavers to the workshops.

In SATS-C a bigger event titled "Trauma Days" is also presented. Trauma days have taken place in 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2010, and 2013. The event usually takes place in a military training facility.



Fig. 1. Picture from SATS workshop in pediatric procedures.

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