
What Should the Intensivist of the Future Look Like?



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The intensivist of the future will need three sets of principles that guide everything they do: an internal set, an interpersonal set and an organisational set.

Those internal principles that we should be selecting for are people who are humble, curious and compassionate. You cannot embrace intensive care medicine if you are not humble enough, and you can't embrace engineering if you think medicine has all the answers. Likewise you have to be curious to learn about other different disciplines and ideas and of course be compassionate.

The second set of principles is to respect, appreciate and help others. Every one of those words is key. Intensive care and medicine is increasingly going to be team provided and we need to be respectful of our teammates. But respect is not enough. I could respect you in my brain, but if I don't recognise you and say, "Oh, great work!", it doesn't mean anything. I could say, "Great work!", but when you are struggling and I don't roll up my sleeves to help you, it doesn't mean very much. So words are really key and thinking about what it looks like if we practise these behaviours.

The third set of behaviours is also key yet underdeveloped in healthcare. They are to be accountable to continuously improve myself, my organisation and my community. Knowledge is growing at an ever-expanding pace. What we learnt in our training is going to be soon out-dated and we need to make sure we are accountable to better ourselves, better our organisations and better our communities in the world we live in. I believe that physicians need to have leadership roles in making the world a better place and we need to hold ourselves accountable for self improvement.

If I were to ask what the intensivist and physician of the future should look like, I would be hiring and training for people who live these key behaviours.

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