



STFYD (IY)

In 1940, a group of students and faculty from Westminster Medical School decided to put on a dinner to raise spirits in the midst of the Blitz. 80 years on, the dinner remains an iconic finale to the end of medical school for final year students to reminisce on their medical school journey with their peers before going their separate ways.

The recent coronavirus outbreak has led to the cancellation of eagerly anticipated electives and an exam season shrouded in uncertainty. Never have our spirits been more in need of being raised. Unfortunately, the ever worsening spread of coronavirus and intensifying government guidelines on social distancing meant that our STFYD was cancelled. This didn't come as much of a surprise to us, but, nonetheless, our dinner jackets had been dry cleaned, the STFYD video had been filmed and copious embarrassing photos had been submitted for the display. Many of us clung on to a glimmer of hope that, at the very least, we wouldn't be deprived of the opportunity to say our final goodbye to ICSM.

We were, obviously, bitterly disappointed by its cancellation and, to make matters worse, new, more stringent, government advice meant that we were unable to gather, to any extent, beyond our own houses. No matter the depth of the disappointment, however, our year showed remarkable positivity at a time when everything appeared bleak. We collectively realised that the ICSM that really matters and the ICSM that will live on forever in our hearts, is a cornucopia of happy memories with our best friends. A Michelin Star lamb shank and a champagne reception at Grand Connaught Rooms does create a fantastic spectacle to mark the zenith of our medical school careers, however, at the end of the day, the night is all about celebrating our wonder-

ful time at medical school, which no pandemic can take away from us. Thanks to simple modern day technology, including the likes of Google Drive and Zoom, our incredible STFYD chair, Kathryn Chang, and a few members of our year teamed up to create a DIY STFYD. The speeches, caricature, STFYD video and snog web were shared online and many of us donned our Sunday best and settled in our living rooms with a glass of champagne to do what we had always planned to do, reminisce on an amazing six years with our best friends.

I was absolutely ecstatic when my year voted for me to do the STFYD speech. It's a huge honour and I had longed for an opportunity to express my gratitude to ICSM and recall the 'odyssey' that we had been through. I had pictured myself at the lectern, stressed about whether Amir Sam would laugh at my Amir Sam joke, and bought a new £300 tuxedo for the occasion. Although the pomp and circumstance of the event fell victim to coronavirus, I did feel that publicising the speeches online, whilst dressed in a tuxedo in my living room, added a sweet poignance to it. After mine and Emma Mittelman's speeches, along with the STFYD video, were made public, the camaraderie of our year erupted on the final year Whatsapp thread. Emma and I received many kind messages and various members of the year group commended the fantastic job Nik Ubhi and Romesh Tirimanna had done with the STFYD Video, saying that it 'makes the current situation not seem so bad looking back at the whole 6

years'. STFYD, in whatever form it took this year, had succeeded once again in its core purpose, raising spirits and giving a fantastic group of final year students the send-off they deserved.

There are no winners in a pandemic. Everyone has lost something. In times like this, it is particularly important for us to appreciate the things that really matter. Former US President Ulysses S. Grant once said, 'The friend in my adversity I shall always cherish the most.' All the frustration and disappointment our year group has faced over the past couple of months, we have faced together. This period has strengthened friendships, made us more appreciative of everything we previously took for granted and has made us more resilient than ever. Being parachuted into a struggling NHS in the midst of a pandemic is not the way any of us imagined we'd be starting our careers. It will be tough, however, I can't think of any better group to take on a challenge of this magnitude than the ICSM Class of 2020.

Laz Ranasinghe

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