

Tips for getting the most out of Ward Rounds

They occur everyday, put the fear of God into some and occasionally seem of limited educational value. Ward rounds can be what you make of them.

Interacting with the patient

Avoid being self-conscious if asked to perform an examination or demonstrate a clinical sign in front of the ward round. It's an excellent opportunity to practice.

Always remember to be sensitive if talking to colleagues or answering questions. Use appropriate language and acknowledge the patient's presence.

Interacting with colleagues

Don't be frightened to ask questions. This will impress most teams, as it appears you're interested and genuinely willing to learn. It also enables you to learn as you go along.

Be flexible. Different consultants operate ward rounds differently - accommodate to this. Make brief notes to refer back to.

Get there on time. Everyone else will not wait and tagging on late is not the best way to impress (or avoid getting picked on!). Surgical rounds are likely to mean an earlier start.

And later...

When you get home later, look up those points you jotted down earlier. This reinforces your learning.

Probably the most valuable part of any ward round is finding suitable patients to return to later. You know who has good clinical features and who will not mind you disturbing them. You will also be a familiar face when you return.

If a 'booby' occurs don't dwell on it. Staff and students change so often nobody will remember. Its part of the learning process.

As you asked questions and offered to get involved on the round you can spend the time you saved doing something else outside hospital.

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