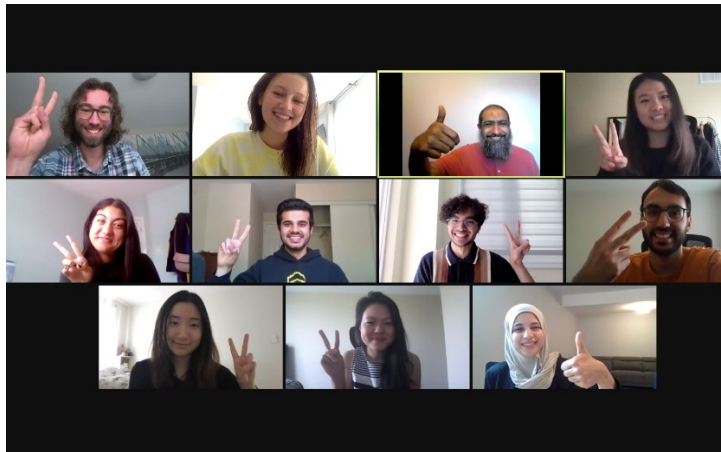


Document Title: **Ottawa Psychiatry Enrichment Program (OPEP) hosts 9 first- and second-year medical students for weeklong training**

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Nine first- and second-year medical students from universities across Canada convened virtually for the 2021 Ottawa Psychiatry Enrichment Program (OPEP).

OPEP is a one-week program held at the end of the academic year. This year, it was held virtually from May 31 through June 4 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The University of Ottawa's Department of Psychiatry hosted 8 students from the University of Ottawa and one student from Western University.

"OPEP 2021 was a great success," said Khalid Bazaid, MD, FRCPC, a psychiatry professor at the University of Ottawa and member of the WPA Working Group on Medical Students. "We look forward to running OPEP for years to come, and paving the road for many more future successful psychiatrists."

The week serves both an educational and social function and is meant to give those who have an interest in psychiatry an opportunity to get a better feel for the specialty. For those who may be uncertain about a life as a psychiatrist, the program aims to provide a clearer model of what that career could be like.

Students were exposed to psychiatrists from various disciplines and backgrounds who have won national awards from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, become deans of medicine, written national bestseller books, and even given TED Talks, as well as many more accomplishments. Students expressed excitement for the opportunity because all their first and second-year observerships were canceled due to the latest pandemic-initiated lockdown; however, the OPEP participants got their very first clinical exposure during this program. They did observerships in community, child and adolescent psychiatry, forensics, perinatal, and the sexual behaviours clinic.

Each day of the program consists of morning interactive virtual seminars and afternoon elective placements. The interactive seminars cover a wide-range of topics related to what it is like to be a psychiatrist, while in the elective placements the students actually experience the day-to-day challenges of practice in the field of psychiatry.

In feedback surveys, the students rated OPEP 2021 4.8/ 5. Some of the testimonials included:

- "Excellent program and I am so glad it was run this year. I sincerely hope it continues to run every year and hopefully can transition to in-person again."
- "I absolutely loved attending OPEP. I found myself going to bed looking forward to waking up and learning something new each day. Signing up was definitely one of the best academic

decisions I've made and I'd highly recommend it to other students who are interested in exploring psychiatry.”

- “All of the faculty were amazing speakers/preceptors - Khadije and Dr. Bazaid were really great at hosting as well as replying to emails.”
- “Participating in OPEP made me certainly interested in exploring Psychiatry.”

“No challenge is too daunting when the end goal is the pursuit of education,” Dr. Bazaid said. “COVID-19 has taught us to be flexible and innovative. We are grateful for all the lecturers, preceptors, organizers, and students who have all stepped forward and made the best of a challenging situation. We cannot thank them enough for making this event possible.”