

## Processes of increasing medical residents' intrinsic motivation: a qualitative study

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aimed to determine qualitatively how medical residents develop intrinsic motivation to learn and work in clinical training settings.

**Methods:** This study was a descriptive qualitative study, which is widely used in healthcare research. We conducted a semi-structured interview aimed to explore key participants' in-depth experiences and perspectives regarding intrinsic motivation. The authors interviewed seven postgraduate Japanese medical residents. The transcripts were analyzed using the sequential and thematic qualitative data analysis technique steps for coding and theorization, which entails coding steps from open to selective, writing a storyline using the final selective codes, and offering theories.

**Results:** External stimulations (a self-handle environment and a near-peer role model) triggered the medical residents' cognitive process (gap recognition, awareness, and internalization) to intrinsic motivation. The residents' awareness of autonomy, responsibility, and independence played a vital role in this process. Furthermore, a psychological feeling of competence also reinforced their intrinsic motivation. Positive feedback and approval from attending physicians and patients' gratitude promoted residents' sense of competence.

**Conclusions:** We illustrated a process for increasing medical residents' intrinsic motivation. The intrinsic motivation was triggered by external stimulations (a self-handle environment and a near-peer role model), which caused the cognitive process: gap recognition, awareness of important attitudes as a doctor (autonomy, responsibility, and independence), and internalization. Since the first step of this process was an external factor, there are potential benefits of designing an appropriate training environment for increasing medical residents' intrinsic motivation.