

Our core activities

High Impact Medicine is a non-profit organisation dedicated to inspiring and empowering medical students and doctors to have a significant positive impact in their careers and giving.

- We support medical students and doctors from all around the world who want to increase their positive impact.
- We do this by fostering a global community that connects them with relevant knowledge, people, and opportunities.
- As a result of our actions, we hope (and have seen in the past) that medical students and doctors will consider their impact when deciding where to direct their attention, time, and giving.

Summary of our core activities and outcomes:

Activities	Interim outcomes	Outcomes we're aiming for in the next 12 months	Overall positive impact we aspire towards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Yearly Introductory Fellowship + university selective course • Connecting people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Mentoring programme ◦ Conferences ◦ Community • Taking action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 1:1 career advice ◦ Career Fellowship ◦ Opportunities-sharing 	<p>Increase and sustain the ability and motivation of our target audience to have a greater positive impact.</p>	<p>Career decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to at least 25 impact-driven career changes (including internships and volunteering) and at least 10 impact-driven career plan changes. <p>Giving decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire at least 20 people to take the Giving What We Can pledge, the Try Giving Pledge, or make an equivalent giving decision. <p>Field-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help at least 1 additional medical school to integrate Hi-Med concepts into their research programme(s) or curriculum. 	<p>Contribute to the protection of lives, reduction of suffering, and increase in wellbeing for all sentient beings, present and future.</p>

All activities

Our target audience¹ is (pre-)medical students and doctors interested in increasing their positive impact.

- Global and inclusive: Everyone is welcome, irrespective of their geographical location or demographics.
- Preference for impact: We prioritise engaging with especially impact-driven, skilled, passionate, and dedicated individuals.

Summary of all our activities and outcomes:

Types of activities	Specific activities	Interim outcomes	Outcomes we're aiming for in the next 12 months	Overall impact we aim to contribute to
Supporting individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 career advice • 1:1 giving discussions • Mentoring programme • Networking (connecting individuals) • Opportunities-sharing via Slack, newsletter, and 1:1s • Volunteering opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the integration of impact-driven decisions and actions into our participants' existing life plans and world views • Increase and sustain people's altruistic motivation • Help our target audience to build their network • Share knowledge and concepts relevant to Hi-Med • Help people to learn and develop high-impact skills • Help people to nurture a sense of agency and self-efficacy • Foster a sense of community and belonging within Hi-Med • Contribute to research that helps us to meet our goals more effectively 	<p>Career decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to at least 25 impact-driven career changes (whether this affects their current paid employment or not), and at least 10 impact-driven career plan changes. <p>Giving decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire at least 20 people to take the Giving What We Can pledge, the Try Giving Pledge, or make an equivalent giving decision. <p>Field-building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help at least 1 additional medical school to integrate Hi-Med concepts into their research programme(s) or curriculum. 	<p>The protection of lives, reduction of suffering, and increase in wellbeing for all sentient beings, present and future.</p>
Supporting groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory Fellowship • Career Fellowship • Conferences • Chapters (Local & National) • Retreats 			
Research and field-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations with academic institutions • Academic publications • Contributions to conferences • Posts on the Effective Altruism Forum • Increasing the effectiveness of our organisation & others 			
Outreach (Broader educational materials & events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast • Newsletter • Blog articles • Giving Games • Introductory events & other virtual & in-person events 			

¹ We are sometimes approached by impact-driven people or organisations outside of our target audience (for advice, volunteering opportunities, or resources). If we judge our existing resources to be a good fit for helping those people/orgs, we do so. Examples of those we've responded to include other value-aligned orgs seeking to exchange advice or resources, as well as motivated individuals from medically-adjacent fields, such as veterinary medicine or public health.

Further considerations

Problem context

Despite a [very wide range of positively impactful careers](#) for which medical doctors could be a good fit, medical career planning is often assumed to [mainly](#) involve selecting a speciality and progressing through speciality training. It is also common for career advice to implicitly assume that doctors will only be working in a hospital or a clinic/practice (e.g., this is implicitly assumed [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

Main assumptions behind our theory of change

[We have included rough probability levels, which connote the probability we assign to each assumption being true. Low: 0-33%; Medium: 33-66%; High: >66%]

- Many medical students and doctors have the capacity to have a much larger positive impact [\[High\]](#)
 - Due to the functions and requirements of medical careers and the competitive selection processes of many medical schools, medicine selects for strongly altruistically motivated, intelligent, high-achieving, scientifically-minded individuals. Medical career paths also provide career capital, social capital, and (at least in some countries) high incomes. [\[High\]](#)
- Many medical students and doctors would have a much larger positive impact if they were exposed to relevant ideas, people, and opportunities (compared to the counterfactual situation of the status quo where they are not exposed to these). [\[Low to medium\]](#)
 - Increasing one's future positive impact often requires making decisions that most of them would not consider (or would not know about) by default. [\[Medium to high\]](#)
 - Being exposed to the *possibility, principles and examples (via role models)* of impact-driven career and donation decisions, makes it more likely that someone with compatible values will decide to make impact-driven career and donation decisions in the future. [\[High\]](#)
- Hi-Med is especially well-suited to enabling medical students and doctors to have a larger positive impact (compared to other organisations). [\[Medium to high\]](#)
 - Medical students and doctors tend to have specific values, needs, abilities, and goals, and an organisation composed of fellow medical students and doctors is more likely to be able to cater to these characteristics (compared to other groups). [\[High\]](#)
 - Medical students and doctors seem, on average², more likely to be inspired to make and sustain high-impact career and giving decisions if they interact with (and ideally feel a sense of belonging within) a group of peers (who have already made such changes) compared to if they only interact with a less specific community. [\[Medium\]](#)
 - Many medical students and doctors would not be reached by (or may not like) current outreach efforts of existing organisations outside of Hi-Med. [\[Medium\]](#)

² Some might prefer to join a non-medical community, because they value the change of conversation topics, but on the other hand, Hi-Med's community doesn't represent the "typical" medical community.

Potential risks associated with our work

- If we fail to communicate our key messages in effective and high-fidelity ways, or if individuals misunderstand or misapply our principles, individuals could end up in a career where they:
 - Do less good than they could have if they'd been exposed to other impact-focused programmes and/or better versions of our programmes instead (i.e., we miss an opportunity to increase their impact as much as we could have, and they do not strive to increase their impact as much as they could have),
 - Take on roles that would be better-suited for someone from another profession,
 - Do less good than they would have by default (e.g., choosing a career path less impactful than clinical medicine in the context of the situation in their country),
 - Or even cause harm (e.g. sharing information hazards, participating in dual use research, or accelerating AI capabilities research rather than safety research).³
- Even if they do not misunderstand our key messages, individuals could make decisions that put them at higher risk of worse *personal* outcomes (such as dropping out of medical school or leaving a secure job, but then being unable to find a better career path). *This risk seems to be less avoidable than the risks above, and we recognise the importance of discussing it with our community members.*

To mitigate these risks, we will continue to:

- Be humble in our communication of what might be impactful.
- Encourage and help people to assess their individual counterfactual impact in terms of their skills, personal fit, available opportunities, and other relevant information.
- Include discussions that directly address risks and potential harms (associated with impact-driven decisions or arising from otherwise well-intentioned work and career plans) as part of our core Intro Fellowship and Career Fellowship curriculum materials and tools.
- Remain mindful of country-specific rates of doctor shortages.
- Wherever possible, avoid including any info-hazardous information, even if it is easily accessible elsewhere. When this is not possible, integrate feedback from field experts into the design of content with potential information hazards and educate facilitators/community members sensitively.
- Talk about back-up plans and job security.
- Emphasise the importance of self-care and mental wellbeing.

³ As of May 2024, we have not heard of such a career change influenced by Hi-Med.