Appraisal is a unique opportunity for discussion of learning needs and outcomes with a trained peer.

The majority of appraisees in our study (99%) felt that the appraiser supported them to think about their own developmental needs and how to meet them.

The success of formative appraisal lies in the discussion between appraiser and appraisee about the individual educational outcomes that are achieved over the year. It is therefore important in the formative model that the appraisees feel they are “moving forward” in their work and careers. Appraisees report in this paper that this form of appraisal could have an important beneficial impact on patient care. It is the feeling of “being valued as a GP” that is important to many appraisees. We show that the learning outcomes achieved through the formative model of appraisals range from the clinical to the life coaching ones.

Appraisees use words such as “inspirational”, “motivational”, “rekindled my enthusiasm” and “encouraging” to express the motivational role behind appraisals that is often essential for any personal development experience.

The GMC has proposed a system that will encompass both appraisal and assessment for revalidation but if there were to be a combined system there would be a need to ensure that the professional development focus and the educational impact brought in by the current appraisal system are not lost.