

TOWARDS FLEXIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Title and Presenter:

Academic Half Days – the students' perspective

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Sub Theme & Paper Type:

Flexible Delivery – Showcase

Abstract:

As with other medical schools, HYMS has a programme in place linking its students studying particular teaching blocks in the latter clinical years of the course to facilitate a bringing together of ideas, experiences and issues raised from students' time on placement. Due to the geographical spread of students around the HYMS region and the fact that thirty two students, the number studying any one teaching block at a time, will be dispersed around five or six different towns or cities, a 75 minute linked telephone conference each week, led by a clinical and scientific tutor with 'expert knowledge' in the subject pertaining to the week in question is provided. Attendance is compulsory and a prescribed format for each session is laid down in the Staff and Student Handbook.

Each session should allow for an extensive questioning of the tutor by the students, based on any queries or experiences they have had during the week. The forum also permits the discussion of any interesting cases observed during the week and the development of ideas and related topics raised by the patients presented. All of this takes place on the background of the prescribed learning outcomes for the week which can be covered either in sequential order or via the discussions generated from the question and answer format or case presentations mentioned.

The flexibility of HYMS' system lies not just in the variety of methods in which the themes and aspects to be learned each week can be addressed but from the diverse nature of the tuition and learning experiences of the students from the various hospital sites in which they are located. If students come suitably prepared and willing to participate fully, allied to the presence of an enthusiastic and engaging tutor, the academic discussion forum can be a valuable addition to the overall medical learning experience. Regrettably, the purpose of the sessions to allow students to cover the week's learning, discuss relative experiences and explore unresolved questions from the week is not always achieved, often as a result of logistical shortcomings, lack of participant enthusiasm or rarely, both.