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Research and Teaching – correlated or co-related?

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Abstract Template

Prescribing Training: A research-informed curriculum for HYMS final year medical students

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Theme: The research-informed curriculum

Type of contribution: Presentation

Abstract:

Background

Prescribing of medicines is one of the most complex and error-prone activities undertaken by doctors. Prescribing errors account for around half of hospital adverse drug events and are mainly preventable¹. There is concern that medical education does not prepare doctors adequately for the complexities of prescribing². Reflecting the evidence and concern, Hull York Medical School (HYMS) devised for its final year students a prescribing curriculum that addresses the technical and therapeutic complexities inherent in prescribing.

Curriculum

This includes

- Prescription-writing: students write practice prescriptions for their patients, reviewed one-to-one, face-to-face with hospital pharmacists
- Formative prescribing and drug dose-calculation assessments: multiple exercises undertaken during hospital placements, students working in facilitated small groups
- Medicines administration: on their interprofessionals training placement, students, side-by-side with nursing staff, administer patients' medicines
- Clinical case scenarios: fortnightly clinical cases sessions that include medication problems, adverse events, prescribing practice.

Summative assessment is undertaken in final medical examinations.

Outcomes

In the annual recruitment interviews conducted by the North Yorkshire East Coast Foundation School in 2009, applicants' prescribing skills were examined; 73% of Year 5 HYMS applicants (n=71) achieved a satisfactory competence score ($\geq 70\%$) compared with 33% non-HYMS UK applicants (n=46)*, and 22% overseas applicants (n=69)*; (* $p < 0.001$ for HYMS applicants compared with others).

In an evaluation of prescribing teaching undertaken among 76 Year 5 HYMS students, final year prescribing training was rated highly. Overall, students felt prepared to undertake the basic prescribing

required by the GMC of Foundation Year 1(F1) doctors: This contrasts with recent studies where students and junior doctors described themselves as under-prepared and lacking knowledge for prescribing and their self-reported prescribing practices were often unsafe^{3, 4}.

Conclusions

The HYMS Year 5 prescribing curriculum was informed by research on prescribing errors and on prescribing teaching. Early evaluation suggests students are becoming competent prescription-writers and feel prepared for prescribing demands. The next step is to assess graduates' real-life prescribing. This work is ongoing and will inform further development of HYMS' curriculum.

References

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