

IN PRACTICE

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STEP INTO MY WORLD: A SIMULATION OF AGEING IN MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Introduction: Quality Improvement Project: Assessing the Impact of an Ageing Experience Workshop on Undergraduate Medical Students' Approaches to Elderly Care.

As part of the curriculum, third-year medical students are introduced to care of elderly patients and ageing related conditions. Current teaching methods and simulation experiences were reviewed, which revealed a potential area for improvement. Through the introduction of an "Ageing Experience Simulation Workshop", this project aimed to improve students' understanding of the ageing process, enhance empathy, and positively influence their attitudes towards older adults.

The workshop was well received by students and was able to positively impact their learning, across five domains. Thus, future work could focus on improving clinical practice.

Methods: Cohorts of third year medical students (first clinical year) at a single site teaching academy used a 2.5-hour workshop that aimed to mimic different aspects of ageing. We simulated 5 domains: sarcopenia, peripheral neuropathy, visual impairment, hearing impairment and mobility disability [1]. A 5-point Likert scale was used with a pre- and post- workshop questionnaire with a total of 15 questions to evaluate the students' feelings regarding elderly patients. Questions were framed in both positive and negative ways based on work by UCLA Geriatrics Attitudes (UCLA-GA) scale and Polizzi's refined version of the ageing semantic differential [2, 3].

Results: A total of forty-nine students were included. From comparison between pre-workshop and post-workshop questionnaire, 5 questions yield a significant shift ($P < 0.01$) in response towards strongly agreeing. These included students reported confidence in understanding ageing, a feeling of empathy towards elderly patients, understanding sight issues, understanding communication difficulties, an understanding of mobility issues experienced in the elderly and felt the need for additional care in elderly patients. The remaining questions had no significant changes in response.

Discussion: This project was designed for medical students to have an experience of ageing and reflect on their experiences. The workshops were facilitated by undergraduate faculty of medical educators familiar with the undergraduate curriculum and debriefing. The elderly can experience several age-related changes which can each affect their body. Results showed that the understanding of age-related conditions did improve which was an aim of the workshop. Separating individual effects of ageing allowed for focus on body systems and preventing overwhelming sensory and motor deprivation when mimicking the ageing process. The results show a clear positive improvement in confidence in the understanding of

common age-related changes. The application to the wider curriculum and understanding for medical students cannot be understated.

Ethics statement: Authors confirm that all relevant ethical standards for research conduct and dissemination have been met. The submitting author confirms that relevant ethical approval was granted, if applicable.

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