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PE9 TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE: REFLECTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSTGRADUATE PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICUM

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The public health profession has been undergoing rapid changes in recent years. Major demographic transformations, globalization, scientific and technological changes, environmental degradation, disparity between the rich and the poor have expanded the field to a much broader and multidisciplinary notion of public health. The new public health involves different professions, including but not limited to physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, biostatisticians, social scientists, administrators and educators. These people work in various settings and are involved in a wide range of activities such as health promotion, surveillance, policy planning etc. They may enter the field immediately after graduation or as mid-career professionals with or without formal public health training. Given the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of the field, incorporation of supervised practice opportunities in the postgraduate training in public health has been emphasized to prepare the public health workforce to respond to the constant changes in society. This paper describes the development of a postgraduate practicum module in a Master of Public Health (MPH) programme in Hong Kong. The practicum was first launched in 2010-2011 as an elective module. A student-driven service learning approach was adopted. Six students from different academic backgrounds were enrolled in the module and placed in different settings. They were engaged in a variety of public health related activities such as policy consultation, advocacy, service evaluation, and health education. Students first had to formulate the learning objectives based on their own interest and ability, as well as the concerns identified at the site. They then had to explore the resources and learning activities necessary achieve the learning objectives. Students applied what they had learnt in the classroom to fieldwork, and at the same time reflected on their experience to achieve a deeper understanding of themselves and the community needs. Through a cycle of action and reflection, service enhanced their learning and their learning also enhanced the services. Service learning emphasizes benefits to all stakeholders and linking practice and theory. The outcomes of the practicum on the students, the school and the community partners, as well as the challenges of the implementation of such learning activities will be discussed.

PE10 EFFECT OF MORAL DILEMMA DISCUSSIONS ON LEVEL OF ETHICAL REASONING (PRELIMINARY REPORT)

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Background

In the last three decades, medical education is changing from the traditional teacher oriented learning towards a more student oriented one. And during the last decade the emphasis is not only on hard skills, but also more and more on soft skills (life skills or social skills), which are deemed even more important than hard skills for physicians to better succeed not only in practice, but also in daily life. Some of the more than twenty soft skills very important for physicians are: motivation, commitment, empathic listening, verbal communication, self reflection, team work, and ethical reasoning.

Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya encourages extracurricular activities for developing general social skills for all students, for which they get points. The Medical Faculty developed a program for its students, especially for developing ethical reasoning skills, for which they also get points. It is called DDM (Diskusi Dilema Moral) or Moral Dilemma Discussions (MDD), once a week for one hour with a facilitator, ten times plus two interactive lectures per semester, for seven semester (until the students get their bachelor degree).

Objective

The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Moral Dilemma Discussions on the development of ethical reasoning using Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development applied in moral dilemma discussions during one semester. This is a preliminary report of the study after one month of MDD and one lecture on ethics.

Method

All first year students participated, 17 males and 33 females. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used. A questionnaire (pre and post) states two moral dilemmas, a general and a personal one. The students are asked how to solve the problem and to state the reason why they make that particular decision. Their answers are evaluated according to Kohlberg's six levels of moral development.

Results

Analysis using SPSS 14.0 showed the level of ethical reasoning was significantly improved in the general moral dilemma situation ($p=0.022$). In the personal dilemma situation the level of improvement is not significant ($p=0.941$).

Conclusion

In this preliminary study, it is found that the level of moral development after one month of MDD and one interactive lecture is significantly improved in the general moral dilemma situation compared to the personal dilemma. This study will continue until the end of the first semester.

Keywords: *ethical-moral dilemma, MDD, ethical reasoning, moral development.*