

Medical students' attitudes & use of evidence based medicine

A qualitative study

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Background

- EBM core subject in medical education
- EBM courses result in increase of knowledge & skill acquisition
- Medical student perception on EBM???
 - Driven by assessments not by application
- Monash MBBS degree
 - Years 1-2 university based
 - Years 3-5 hospital based



Aims

To identify undergraduate medical student perceptions on EBM including;

- Current use as students, and
- Future use as clinicians

Methods

- Focus group discussions with 23 third year medical students
- Criteria-based, volunteer sampling was used to recruit eligible participants
- All focus groups homogeneous to hospital setting (metropolitan or rural)
- Independent thematic analysis

Results

1. Current use of EBM as students

- Applying evidence into practice
- Relevant in current year of 'practice'
- Applicability to PBL tutorials

Results

2. Future use of EBM as clinicians

- Process for 'continuing education' as clinicians
- Critical mind even though not specifically implementing it on a daily basis

'I don't know that I'd specifically use it (critical appraisal) but once you know it you always think about it when you're looking at things'

Results

3. Barriers for EBM use

- Behaviour and uptake of 'senior' clinicians
- Resources in clinical setting
 - Technology
 - Common 'meeting of the minds'

Results

4. Facilitators for EBM use

- Mentorship from clinicians as students
'It's embedded in the culture, like I see everybody doing it so I think I'll do it'
- 'Meeting of the minds'
 - Students + early-career clinicians + mid-career clinicians + senior clinicians

Limitations

- Qualitative data provides context ≠ generalisability is questionable in different settings
- Facilitator was course coordinator
 - Participants confirmed it did not influence their responses
 - Anonymous quantitative survey validated qualitative findings

Conclusions

- Acceptance of EBM when there is a demonstrable link between 'theory' & practice (hospital setting)
- Greater emphasis on EBM mentorship
 - Clinical tutors
 - Integrated activities between students & clinicians