Peer-Assisted Learning of Ebm in, a UK Medical School: Evaluation of the NICE Evidence Search Student Champion Scheme

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Abstract : Introduction: NICE Evidence Search Student Champion Scheme is a peer-assisted learning scheme that aims to improve the routine use of evidence-based information by future health and social care staff. The focus is on the NICE evidence search portal that provides selected information from more than 800 reliable health, social care, and medicines sources, including up-to-date guidelines and information for the public. This paper aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme when implemented in Liverpool School of Medicine and to understand the experiences of those attending. Methods: Twelve student champions were recruited and trained in February 2020 as peer tutors during a workshop facilitated by NICE. Cascade sessions were then organised and delivered on an optional basis for students, in small groups of < 10 to approximately 70 attendees. Surveys were acquired immediately before and 8-12 weeks after cascade sessions (n=47 and 45 respectively). Data from these surveys facilitated the analysis of the scheme. Results: Surveys demonstrated 74% of all attendees frequently searched for health and social care information online as a part of their studies. However, only 15% of attendees reported having prior formal training on searching for health information, despite receiving such training earlier on in the curriculum. After attending cascade sessions, students reported a 58% increase in confidence when searching for information using evidence search, from a pre-session a baseline of 36%. Conclusion: NICE Evidence Search Student Champion Scheme provided clear benefits for attending students, increasing confidence in searching for peer-reviewed, mainly secondary sources of health information. The lack of reported training represents the unmet need that the champion scheme satisfies, and this likely benefits student champions as well as attendees. Increasing confidence in searching for healthcare information online may support future evidence-based decision-making.

Keywords : evidence-based medicine, NICE, medical education, medical school, peer-assisted learning
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