

Alumni Experiences of How Their Undergraduate Medical Education Instilled and Fostered a Commitment to Community-Based Work in Later Life: A Sequential Exploratory Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract : Health professionals are the key players who can help achieve the goals of population health equity. Social accountability (SA) of health professionals emphasizes their role in addressing issues of equity in the population they serve. Therefore, health professional education must focus on instilling SA in health professionals. There is limited literature offering a longitudinal perspective of how students sustain the practice of SA in later life. This project aims to identify the drivers of social accountability among physicians. This study employed an exploratory mixed methods design (QUAL-> Quant) to explore alumni perceptions and experiences. The qualitative data, collected via 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, provided an understanding of the perceptions of the alumni regarding the influence of their undergraduate learning environment on their SA. This was followed by a quantitative portion -a questionnaire designed from the themes identified from the qualitative data. Emerging themes from the study highlighted community-centered education and a focus on social and preventative medicine in both curricular and non-curricular facilitators of SA among physicians. Curricular components included opportunities to engage with the community, such as roadside clinics, community-orientation programs, and postings at a secondary hospital. Other facilitators that emerged were the faculty leading by example, a subsidized fee structure, and a system that prepared students for practice in rural and remote areas. The study offers a fresh perspective and dimension on how SA is addressed by medical schools. The findings may be adapted by medical schools to understand how their own SA initiatives have been sustained among physicians over the long run.

Keywords : community-based work, global health, health education, medical education, providing health in remote areas, social accountability

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