World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology
International Journal of Educational and Pedagogical Sciences
Vol:19, No:05, 2025

The Efficacy of a Student Designed and Led Near Peer Anatomy Teaching

Authors : Mark Heads, Carrie Adamson

Abstract : Introduction This study evaluated the educational merits of the teaching activities of 'Sheffield Anatomy Society,' a student society with minimal faculty oversight which delivers near peer teaching in a range of formats to support students in their revision. Near peer, teaching is defined as teaching delivered by more senior students who have themselves recently completed the course content. This study was conducted between early April and late May 2022. This programme aims to improve student knowledge of anatomy, increase student confidence in their anatomy learning and cultivate a sense of community. The sessions were delivered by more senior medical students and by medical students undertaking an intercalated Master's degree in Human Anatomy with Education. Background: The majority of studies concerning near peer teaching focus on faculty designed programmes. Few studies have examined entirely student led near peer teaching of anatomy. Existing studies have been favourable but have limited qualitative examination of the benefits and weaknesses of near peer teaching. Various drawbacks have been proposed in the literature but not extensively investigated in practice. This study examines student led near peer anatomy teaching across a range of formats and considers these proposed criticisms. Methods: The teaching series consisted of 11 online lectures, a small group teaching session, two in person mock spotter examinations, and an online mock examination. Feedback forms were given for each session, and follow up interviews were conducted. Thematic analysis utilising an interpretivist epistemology was conducted on the feedback form responses and interview transcripts. Findings: 207 first year medical students, 34 second year biomedical science students, and 12 third year biomedical science students completed one or more feedback forms following these sessions, with 875 responses being collected in total. Six interviews were conducted. 99.5% of respondents said that they would recommend these sessions to other students. The quantitative results ranged from a mean of 4.6-4.8/5 per session when asked to rate how useful the students found it. Qualitative: analysis yielded numerous strengths and some weaknesses of the programme. The most commonly cited strength was that students found the explanations readily comprehensible. Students also praised the interactive nature of the sessions, with students frequently saying they felt more able to engage with interactive elements and ask questions in these sessions than in faculty teaching. Students did, however, raise some issues. The most common drawback students mentioned was a desire for more help preparing for their examinations, especially more examination style questions. Criticisms of the teaching itself were less prominent and typically reflected time constraints and limited resources. Conclusions : This study suggests student organised near peer teaching, utilising interactive online lectures, small group teaching, and mock examinations, can be an effective method for supporting students studying anatomy. Students reported improvements in their knowledge as a result of the sessions, greater confidence approaching their examinations, and this programme has helped foster an environment where students feel able to ask questions outside of sessions and even get involved with teaching themselves the following academic year.

Keywords : medical education, near peer teaching, anatomy teaching, online learning
Conference Title : ICMNE 2025 : International Conference on Medical and Nursing Education
Conference Location : Rome, Italy
Conference Dates : May 03-04, 2025