

Global Health Student Selected Components in Undergraduate Medical Education: Analysis of Student Feedback and Reflective Writings

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Abstract : Background: The University of Bristol provides all medical students the opportunity to undertake student selected components (SSCs) at multiple stages of the undergraduate programme. SSCs enable students to explore areas of interest that are not necessarily covered by the curriculum. Students are required to produce a written report and most use SSCs as an opportunity to undertake an audit or small research project. In 2013 Swindon Academy, based at the Great Western Hospital, offered eight students the opportunity of a global health SSC which included a two week trip to rural hospital in Uganda. This SSC has since expanded and in 2017 a total of 20 students had the opportunity to undertake small research projects at two hospitals in rural Uganda. 'Tomorrows Doctors' highlights the importance of understanding healthcare from a 'global perspective' and student feedback from previous SSCs suggests that self-assessed knowledge of global health increases as a result of this SSC. Through the most recent version of this SSC students had the opportunity to undertake projects in a wide range of specialties including paediatrics, palliative care, surgery and medical education. Methods: An anonymous online questionnaire was made available to students following the SSC. There was a response rate of 80% representing 16 out of the 20 students. This questionnaire surveyed students' satisfaction and experience of the SSC including the level of academic, project and spiritual support provided as well as perceived challenges in completing the project and barriers to healthcare delivery in the low resource setting. This survey had multiple open questions allowing the collection of qualitative data. Further qualitative data was collected from the students' project report. The suggested format included a reflection and all students completed these. All qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Results: All respondents rated the overall experience of the SSC as 'good' or 'excellent'. Preliminary data suggest that students' confidence in their knowledge of global health, diagnosis of tropical diseases and management of tropical diseases improved after completing this SSC. Thematic analysis of students' reflection is ongoing but suggests that students gain far more than improved knowledge of tropical diseases. Students reflect positively on having the opportunity to research in a low resource setting and feel that by completing these projects they will be 'useful' to the hospital. Several students reflect the stark contrast to healthcare delivery in the UK and recognise the 'privilege' of having a healthcare system that is free at the point of access. Some students noted the different approaches that clinicians in Uganda had to train in 'taking ownership' of their own learning. Conclusions: Students completing this SSC report increased knowledge of global health and tropical medicine. However, their reflections reveal much broader learning outcomes and demonstrate considerable insight in multiple topics including conducting research in the low resource setting, training and healthcare inequality.

Keywords : global health, medical education, student feedback, undergraduate

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