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A Scholarly spin on practice: the impact of longitudinal integrated clerkships on the development of academic scholarship in general clinical practice

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Abstract

All senior medical students at the University of Wollongong in Australia undertake a longitudinal integrated community-based clerkship in a regional or rural community. In addition to continuity of patient care and curriculum, the clerkship offers each student individualized professional development by experienced generalist practitioners. These practitioners predicted outcomes from their relationship with the long-term students, including a more scholarly approach to clinical practice (1). In 1990, Boyer outlined the concept of four domains of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching (2). More recently, a working definition of clinical scholarship in academic medicine has been proposed (3). This paper describes the development of a culture of academic scholarship amongst clinician preceptors supervising long-term clinical clerkship students in their community.

Keywords

impact, spin, longitudinal, integrated, clerkships, development, academic, scholarship, general, clinical, practice, scholarly

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Abstracts

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Introduction: All senior medical students at the University of Wollongong in Australia undertake a longitudinal integrated community-based clerkship in a regional or rural community. In addition to continuity of patient care and curriculum, the clerkship offers each student individualized professional development by experienced generalist practitioners. These practitioners predicted outcomes from their relationship with the long-term students, including a more scholarly approach to clinical practice (1). In 1990, Boyer outlined the concept of four domains of scholarship: discovery, integration, application and teaching (2). More recently, a working definition of clinical scholarship in academic medicine has been proposed (3). This paper describes the development of a culture of academic scholarship amongst clinician preceptors supervising long-term clinical clerkship students in their community.

Methods: After the first student cohort had completed their 12-month clerkship, we interviewed 26 generalist practitioners to investigate the impact of the student placement on aspects of scholarship relating to their clinical practice. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts were undertaken.

Results: Two-thirds of clinicians interviewed indicated that the presence of the medical student improved the quality of care in their practice, citing updated knowledge, research, and reflective practice. Qualitative analysis transcripts provided direct support for the development of academic scholarship in clinical medicine in this environment with evidence of discovery, application and translation of knowledge, and creating an environment for shared knowledge and collaborative partnerships.

Conclusion: The longitudinal integrated clerkship and model can directly influence the development of a culture of scholarship amongst generalist practitioners involved in the supervision of medical students.

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