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Increasing medical students' capacity to practice evidence-based medicine through improving student participation and interest in Journal Club

Warren C. Rich

University of Wollongong, wrich@uow.edu.au

Judy Mullan

University of Wollongong, jmullan@uow.edu.au

Kathryn M. Weston

University of Wollongong, kathw@uow.edu.au

Peter L. McLennan

University of Wollongong, petermcl@uow.edu.au

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Abstract

Research indicates that graduating doctors believe they are deficient in the skills needed to become evidence-based practitioners. To address this the University of Wollongong's new Graduate School of Medicine has embedded research and critical analysis (RCA) skills into the case-based curriculum. A key component of the RCA curriculum is improving the medical students' critical appraisal skills by participating in Journal Club during their first phase of the course. Feedback from the first two student cohorts participating in Journal Club suggested that it was not important or interesting.

To increase the level of interest, enthusiasm and participation in Journal Club peer-assessment and an end-of-year reward through friendly competition between tutorial groups were added for the third cohort of students.

Keywords

journal, interest, participation, student, club, medicine, increasing, evidence, practice, capacity, students, medical, improving

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Increasing medical students' capacity to practice evidence-based medicine through improving student participation and interest in Journal Club

Warren Rich, Judy Mullan, Kathryn Weston and Peter McLennan
Graduate School of Medicine, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia

Research indicates that graduating doctors believe they are deficient in the skills needed to become evidence-based practitioners. To address this the University of Wollongong's new Graduate School of Medicine has embedded research and critical analysis (RCA) skills into the case-based curriculum. A key component of the RCA curriculum is improving the medical students' critical appraisal skills by participating in Journal Club during their first phase of the course. Feedback from the first two student cohorts participating in Journal Club suggested that it was not important or interesting.

To increase the level of interest, enthusiasm and participation in Journal Club peer-assessment and an end-of-year reward through friendly competition between tutorial groups were added for the third cohort of students.

Data will be collected from students and academics. Evidence of change in students' attitudes towards Journal Club will be collected through an open-ended survey of student opinions about the RCA element of their course and focus groups which will be undertaken with both students and academics to investigate their perceptions of the revised Journal Club format.

Currently, there is an increase in student interest, enthusiasm and participation in Journal Club following the initiative. Anecdotally, feedback from students and academics has been positive and there is increased student engagement and motivation. Also, improvements in summative RCA assessments utilising Journal Club skills is evident. Assessment of changes in the students' research capability is in progress and will be available at the conference.