Evaluation of a near-peer teaching seminar tailored to medical students with a non-biological science background: A wellbeing and support community.

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Introduction

- Warwick Medical School’s (WMS) Graduate Entry MBChB degree accepts students from all educational backgrounds.
- Studies show that students from a non-Biological science (NBS) background perform as well as their Bio-science background peers in Graduate Entry Medicine. 1, 2
- However, NBS students also experience significant psychosocial stress in adapting 3
- 2016 cohort WMS students felt that NBS students would benefit from dedicated community and support structures.
- Near-peer teaching (teaching by senior students on the same curriculum) is commonly used in medical education as an effective educational too, and is widespread at WMS. 4
- Students in Phase 2 of WMS (2016 cohort) ran a near-peer taught seminar, designed to meet the needs of Phase 1 (2017 cohort) students with NBS backgrounds.
- We evaluated the impact of this teaching seminar, in meeting the specific needs of students with NBS backgrounds, particularly looking at the value of community and support.

Methods

- Anonymous online questionnaire (Google Forms).
- Quantitative + Qualitative evaluation.
- 24 responses from 1st year medical students who attended (19 NBS students).

Results

- 83% of participants ‘agree’ or found it ‘essential’ to their learning that attendees were from similar NBS backgrounds.
- 63% found having other attendees from similar NBS backgrounds as ‘essential’ to their feeling comfortable in raising questions.
- 88% “agreed” or found it “essential” to have a community of people with similar NBS backgrounds.
- All students surveyed felt there were no other forms of support at WMS targeted at students from a NBS background.

Discussion

- Near-peer teaching has proved a valuable tool for Phase 1 medical students for:
  o Educational reinforcement
  o Peer + Near-peer feedback and wellbeing support
- This evaluation highlights the demand for NBS student support
- Results indicate that this near-peer seminar teaching helps address this need.
- This model could be used successfully in other graduate medical programmes and could assist in recruiting students from diverse backgrounds.

References:


Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Dr Catherine Bennett, Sachin De Stone, Paul O’Connor and Bridget McManamon
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“I found that non scientist teaching was an essential part of my learning this year and the only place where I felt I could ask ‘basic’ or silly questions”

“As a student from an arts background I... don’t know if I’d still be here without the teaching and support of the non-science teachers and the friends I’ve made in the seminars”

“The pre block sessions are fantastic - teaching us the basic science stuff that isn’t covered anywhere else on the course.”

“I’ve found the Non-Scientists teaching absolutely critical to my understanding of some complicated topics this year, which were not explained during lectures at a level that I could understand. I went to a normal student seminar as well, which was useful, but not as helpful in terms of demystifying some of the hardcore science!”

I feel it is important to me to have a community of people with similar, non-science backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
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</table>

I feel the content is more appropriate for my learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Essential</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
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The teaching quality overall was...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
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I was a near-peer teaching seminar assistant. This was important to me for:

- 100% said it was important to have a dedicated community
- 100% said it was important to receive additional support
- 100% said it was important to receive additional feedback

“I found that non-pedagogical teaching was essential part of my learning this year and the only place where I felt I could ask ‘basic’ or silly questions.”

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