

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Perceived tutor benefits of teaching near peers: Insights from two near peer teaching programmes in South East Scotland

Dear Sir

Increasing emphasis is being placed on training to teach and teaching opportunities for doctors at all career stages (GMC 2010). A number of junior doctor-led teaching programmes have been described in the literature, with some evidence suggesting that students perceived such programmes of similar quality to teaching from senior faculty (Qureshi et al. 2012). Two such programmes in South East Scotland are 'Bedside Teachers' (teaching clinical examination on real patients) and 'Year 5 Prescribing' (teaching practical prescribing). We evaluated the benefits of participating in these programmes.

Foundation Year 1 and 2 doctors who had participated in 2010–2011 were recruited. 'Questionnaire 1' (exploring junior doctors' attitudes and preparedness towards teaching) was distributed at the 'tutor training day' at the start of the teaching programme. 'Questionnaire 2' was distributed at the end of the academic year, evaluating the experience of teaching.

Totally 122 foundation doctors attended the training day. 75% completed 'Questionnaire 1'. 48 participated in 'Bedside Teachers' or the 'Year 5 Prescribing' teaching programme, all of whom returned 'Questionnaire 2'.

Totally 76% reported no formal teacher training before the tutor training day. 71% percent would have liked teacher training as a medical student. 8% of junior doctors previously

felt pressured into teaching on the wards when they did not feel sufficiently prepared to.

100% of junior doctors felt they were able to teach at a time convenient to them. 10% were able to teach during allocated work hours and 6% were able to leave their pager ('bleep') with a colleague whilst teaching. The strongest reason cumulatively reported for involvement in teaching was to help students with their learning. 96% of junior doctors enjoyed teaching on this programme. 91% felt more prepared to teach and 93% reported that they were motivated to do more to improve their teaching skills by the end of the programme

The benefits of junior doctor-led teaching are linked to both preparedness of junior doctors to teach, and how easily teaching can be facilitated. There currently seems to be a lack of teacher training in undergraduate and junior doctor curricula. We have developed a near peer-led teaching model that helps junior doctors organise and prepare for teaching. Without greater support junior doctors will continue to have to teach in their spare time or whilst also having clinical duties, potentially feeling underprepared. Given potential benefits, more should be done to incorporate both teaching opportunities into junior doctor timetables.

Zeshan U. Qureshi, Kyle R. Gibson, Michael Ross, Centre for Medical Education, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK.
E-mail: zeshan.u.qureshi@gmail.com

Simon Maxwell, Clinical Pharmacology Unit, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

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