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SUBMISSION ROLE: Research and Innovation Abstracts

PRESENTATION TYPE: Oral or Poster

ABSTRACT BODY:

Short Description: The Spectrum of Physician Advocacy-1 (SPA-1) at Boston University School of Medicine is a student-led, faculty-mentored elective designed to introduce advocacy training in undergraduate medical education. This study evaluates the effectiveness of the 2015 SPA-1 course. Participants were shown to have more positive attitudes, improved knowledge, and increased skills related to health advocacy, which demonstrates the benefit of student-faculty collaboration in undergraduate medical advocacy training.

Abstract: Purpose:

There is increasing recognition of the importance of advocacy training in promoting professionalism and social accountability among future physicians. The Spectrum of Physician Advocacy (SPA-1) at Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) is now in its tenth year as a student-led, faculty-mentored elective. The course trains students to recognize social barriers to health and leverage their position as future healthcare providers to reduce these disparities. In this study, we evaluate the impact of the 2015 SPA-1 course on participants' attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to health advocacy.

Methods:

A 27-item survey was administered to medical and dental students enrolled in the SPA-1 elective before and after completion of the course (pre- and post-intervention). The survey used Likert scales with values ranging from 1 to 5. Items were divided into four categories: attitude towards advocacy in medicine, attitude towards advocacy in medical education, advocacy knowledge, and confidence in advocacy skills. Self-reported responses in each category were summed to create individual scores. Pre- and post-intervention scores were then analyzed using paired t-tests.

Results:

Of the 26 students enrolled in SPA-1, 24 (92%) completed both pre- and post-intervention surveys. Key findings include a significant increase in positive attitudes among participants towards both advocacy in medicine ($p=0.0304$) and advocacy in medical education ($p=0.0081$). Students also demonstrated a significant increase in advocacy knowledge ($p<0.0001$) and confidence using advocacy skills ($p<0.0001$).

Discussion/Conclusions:

Medical and dental students who participated in SPA-1 demonstrated more positive attitudes, improved knowledge, and increased skills related to health advocacy. This intervention demonstrates the effectiveness of student-led, faculty-mentored advocacy training in undergraduate medical education. Future research on health advocacy curricula should continue to investigate best practices for collaborative teaching between faculty and students.

References: Bhate TD, Loh LC. Building a Generation of Physician Advocates: The Case for Including Mandatory Training in Advocacy in Canadian Medical School Curricula. *Acad Med.* 2015;90(12):1602-6.

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Focus of Presentation: UME

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