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Effectiveness of a Hybrid Social Determinants of Health Experience

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Effectiveness of a Hybrid Social Determinants of Health Experience

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Outstanding Presentation Award Winner

Abstract

Background: Education on the social determinants of health (SDOH), specifically social inequities in healthcare, should be incorporated throughout medical education.¹ Experiential models have been proven to impact both knowledge and attitudes^{2, 3}, thus we built a hybrid curriculum that allowed students to explore how the SDOH affected different populations within our city. Instructional methods: The session began with a video of local patient and provider testimonies. Students were divided into groups, each focusing on a specific vulnerable population. The students completed a local worksheet-guided virtual neighborhood survey using public health reports with videos and images. Each group then completed a health policy activity specific to their population. Next, a panel of local experts discussed opportunities for advocacy. Finally, students from each group were intermixed to reflect on what they learned about each of their populations.

Educational outcomes: A mixed methods approach was used using pre-post surveys. Quantitative measures included knowledge and self-reported confidence in assessing for and managing the SDOH. Qualitative measures included open-ended questions regarding how the experience changed their understanding and attitude regarding the SDOH. The 117 students significantly increased scores on the knowledge assessment ($p=0.002$), confidence in addressing SDOH with patients ($p<0.001$), ability to refer patients to community resources ($p=0.024$), and advocacy skills ($p=0.010$). The most common themes from the qualitative analysis indicated that the experience made SDOH concepts real for the students, increased their awareness of SDOH and resources available to address them, and improved their confidence in advocating for their patients. Most (84%) students reported this experience changed their attitude in working with patients, primarily by making them more empathetic and increasing the importance the student placed on discussing the SDOH. Discussion: This SDOH experience improved students' knowledge and confidence, while changing their attitudes regarding the SDOH's impact on patients.

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