

BACKGROUND

- M2 Medicine has had “stand alone” small group case-based (CBS) sessions for a number of years.
- What is needed is integration of learning issues from Pathology and Pharmacology into these sessions.

PROJECT AIM

- The aim of this project is to pilot integration of Medicine, Pathology, and Pharmacology in the CBS sessions in Academic Year (AY) 2014-15.
- Using the information from our experiences and student evaluations for AY 2014-15, we will adjust this integrative program for upcoming academic years.

PROJECT DESIGN/STRATEGY

- Prior to the CBS session M2 students take a 5-question test on the reading material assigned prior to the session.
- Faculty facilitators discuss the unknown case with the students in small groups in an interactive manner.
- Following the CBS small group session the Pathology and Pharmacology issues relevant to the case are presented in a classroom session.
- The current M2 students have evaluated the first and the final sessions of AY 2014-15 using e*value (a 5-point Likert scale). 7 selected M3 students (M2's in AY 2013-14) met with the project coordinator in a focus group immediately following the first session in AY 2014-15.

CHANGES MADE (PDSA CYCLES)

Plan: The course directors of Medicine, Pathology, and Pharmacology met before each CBS session to decide on a format for the integrated sessions. Appropriate clinical cases were developed by the Medicine course director.

Do: Three sessions were carried out in AY 2014-15 and the first and final sessions were evaluated. Based on evaluations of the first session the following changes were made: more time was devoted to the cases in small groups, the sessions were better coordinated with the CBS case diagnoses, a moderator presided over the classroom sessions, and attempts were made to make the classroom discussions more specific to the clinical cases.

Study: Using a 5-point Likert scale the M2 students evaluated the first and final sessions online using e*value. Immediately following the first session there was a focus meeting of 7 selected M3 students to obtain their feedback.

Act: The involved course directors will need to meet to discuss the first year's experience and look for ways to improve the integrated CBS sessions in AY 2015-16 using our observations and the students' evaluations.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

- Based on the overall impression of the faculty the initial and second sessions went well but there was unexpected redundancy in the final session.
- The statements used in the e*value survey of the first and third sessions included the following:
 1. Increased my understanding of the mechanism and treatment of the discussed disease.
 2. Increased my ability to develop a relevant problem list and a prioritized differential diagnosis.
 3. Increased my understanding of the evidence-based approach to test ordering.
 4. Successfully integrated material from the three courses.
 5. Should be used more frequently in the M2 curriculum.
- Of the 80 M2 students 71 (89%) completed the first and 65 (81%) completed the second survey conducted after the final CBS session.
- First survey results: for the first 4 questions, 82 to 90% responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”; for the 5th question, 79.2% responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- Second survey results: for the first 3 questions 65 to 71% responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.” For the 4th and 5th questions respectively, only 52% and 47% responded with “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- Some of the concerns included convening into a large group after meeting in small groups, redundancy and repetition of subject matter, and the fact that the added classroom session makes it a long day.

LESSONS LEARNED

- There should be better coordination between the courses in the classroom sessions.
- Unplanned redundancy or repetition should be avoided.
- The comments in the classroom sessions should be very specific to the case being discussed.
- There should be a moderator for the classroom sessions.
- More time should be devoted to the small group sessions; this means less time for the classroom sessions.

NEXT STEPS

- Take the lessons learned from the integrated sessions conducted in AY 2014-15 and apply them to those sessions in AY 2015-16.
- The course directors will need to meet prior to the next academic year to discuss implementation of changes that will improve the integrated sessions.
- After the first integrated session of AY 2015-16 the students will be surveyed again to determine if the changes have been effective.

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