Emergency Medicine Interest Group: Faculty and Preclinical Medical Students Differ in Their Preferences for Educational Objectives

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Objective: To assess the perceived needs of preclinical medical students exploring the field of emergency medicine (EM) and compare their opinions with EM faculty regarding appropriate educational interventions.

Methods: Forty-eight medical students who are self-selected members of our Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG) and 15 EM faculty involved in medical student education from our medical school completed a survey that listed 16 educational interventional workshops. All were asked to grade the perceived usefulness of each to preclinical students. We determined our interventions by including previous workshops we conducted and by performing a web search for EMIG sites at U.S. medical schools. We conducted a PubMed search to ascertain whether there were specific recommendations for EMIG curriculum, but none existed. Data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Results: Medical students strongly desired workshops in suturing (48/48; 100%), splinting (47/48; 97.9%), and basic EKG interpretation (47/48; 97.9%). The least desired topics were: history of EM (16/48; 33.3%), how to get involved in national EM organizations (20/48; 41.7%), and physician wellness (21/48; 43.8%). Faculty strongly supported interventions in conducting focused history and physical examinations (14/15; 93.3%), specialty of EM (14/15; 93.3%), and basic EKG interpretation (12/15; 80.0%). Lowest faculty preferences were: bedside ultrasound (5/15; 33.3%), history of EM (7/15; 46.7%), and emergency radiology (7/15; 46.7%).

Conclusion: Preclinical student and faculty opinions of important educational interventions differed widely. Faculty favored the approach to the undifferentiated patient, an introduction to the specialty; whereas students preferred hands-on workshops. Both groups agreed that basic EKG interpretation was useful. These data are useful in designing an educational program that is interesting to preclinical students while meeting needs of this group as perceived by medical student educators.