

Exploring unmet physician learning needs in the management of pain and substance use disorder in Canada: Results and recommendations from a needs assessment study

Category: Oral Presentation

Abstract Body

Background

Canadian medical institutions lack a standardized training curriculum in delivering pain management and substance use disorder education. Given this, and the current challenges of the opioid crisis, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) initiated a study that assessed the needs of physicians in managing pain and substance use disorder. We identified gaps in physician learning needs in pain management and substance use disorder and analyzed participant-informed recommendations for improving continuing professional development (CPD) programs. The results and feedback will be utilized to develop a national curriculum on pain management and substance use disorder.

Methods

Open ended surveys (n = 11) were conducted online with representatives from CPD offices at 11 of 17 Canadian medical schools and telephone interviews (n = 14) were conducted with pain management and substance use experts and with representatives from national associations. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the narrative survey and interview data.

Summary of Results

Participants identified knowledge gaps related to (a) how to use and interpret data on prescribing habits, (b) how to set goals to improve prescribing habits, (c) the role of behaviour change in pain management and substance/opioid use disorder, and (d) patients' lived experiences related to pain management and substance/opioid use disorder. Participants reported a need for interactive, multi-modal CPD programs, compelling and diverse topic choices. Participants recommended that CPD programs be collaborative, provide context-specific training scenarios, interactive and inclusive of multiple learning modalities. Participants noted that programs should have real-world applications, provide opportunity for reflections, be accessible, and be informed by clear educational theories and evaluation models.

Discussion and conclusion

Participants believed that collaborative CPD programs can provide opportunities for learners to engage, learn from other professions, and build interdisciplinary networks. Effective programs should vary in context, be interactive, and should include multiple learning modalities, account for patients' lived experiences, and have real-world applications. These findings have led to the development and implementation of a new competency-based curriculum and educational modules on the management of pain and substance use disorder for CPD by the AFMC.

Key Words

- Education
- Opioids/Opiates
- Pain
- Prevention/Harm Reduction

Learning Objective # 1

Identify gaps in physician learning needs in pain management and substance use disorder in Canada.

Learning Objective # 2

Present participant-informed recommendations for improving continuing professional development (CPD) programs related to pain management and substance use disorder.

Reference # 1

Graves L, Dalgarno N, Van Hoorn R, Hastings-Truelove A, Mulder J, Kolomitro K, Kirby F, van Wylick R. Creating change: Kotter's Change Management Model in action. *Can. Med. Ed. J* [Internet]. 2023 Apr. 3 [cited 2023 Apr. 26];. Available from: <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cmej/article/view/76680>

Reference # 2

Kolomitro K, Graves L, Kirby F, Turnidge J, Hastings Truelove A, Dalgarno N, van Wylick R, Stockley D, Mulder J. Developing a Curriculum for Addressing the Opioid Crisis: A National Collaborative Process. *J Med Educ Curric Dev*. 2022 Apr 26;9:23821205221082913. doi: 10.1177/23821205221082913.

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