

Addictions Medicine in Canadian Undergraduate Medical Education

Category: Poster Presentation (in person)

Abstract Body

Background: The increasing prevalence of addictions within Canada has been seen to have major implications on patient outcomes, health management, and treatment by healthcare providers. Although management options available have increased greatly over recent years, evidence shows physicians feel unprepared, and uncertain around how to effectively treat and manage addictions^{1, 2}.

Purpose: So where does this gap in education and lack of preparedness stem from? There is a growing recognition of the importance of addiction education. But the majority of the efforts have been geared towards educating residents, nursing, and social workers³. However, the extent of addictions education at the undergraduate medical level in Canada is unknown. We feel that this is an important issue that can only be best addressed once it is fully understood.

Method: The project aims to assess student perception of the prevalence and delivery of addictions education, their attitudes towards addictions, and addictions knowledge. While also comparing the student perception of addictions education to that of relevant school administrative personnel.

Results: Data collection is ongoing, but preliminary data is presented here. Students report that the majority of their addiction education happens in their 2nd year (pre clerkship), primarily in lecture or tutorial format, with most students (55%) reporting between 0 to 4 hours of education. When asked if they feel their school should devote more time in their undergraduate medical curriculum towards addiction medicine education, 56% answered “Yes” and 29% “Maybe”. Students answering “Yes”, report that they feel unprepared, despite addictions being a prevalent issue amongst patients. Students' reports will be compared to what is reported from school administrators once we have collected that data.

Conclusion: Throughout medical school and beyond, the majority of medical students will have clinical encounters with people who have addictions. Based on our early data collected, it is apparent that a large percentage of undergraduate medical students desire increased curricular time focused on addiction medicine.

Key Words

- Education
- Substance Use Disorder (general)

Learning Objective # 1

Understand the scope, timing, and mode of delivery of addiction medicine curriculum in undergraduate medical program in Canada

Learning Objective # 2

Understand how Canadian undergraduate medical students perceive the current addiction medicine education they are receiving

Reference # 1

1 Kestler, A. et al., (2021). Buprenorphine–naloxone practice and attitudes in 22 Canadian emergency physician groups: a cross-sectional survey. *Canadian Medical Association Open Access Journal*, 9(3), E864-E873.

Reference # 2

2 Hoyeck, P. et al., (2020). Understanding current practice of opioid use disorder management in emergency departments across Canada: a cross-sectional study. *Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 22(4), 494-498.

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