Preparation Medical Students to Care for Patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Background
- Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) experience worse health and increased barriers to routine care compared to people without disabilities.
- Improving access and quality of care is essential to eliminating the health disparities among patients with disabilities.
- Medical education is increasingly expected to address underserved and vulnerable populations and teach future physicians to be culturally competent.
- Training culturally competent physicians is a major goal of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (2007) and is a required component of medical training.
- Disability education addresses LCME goals of cultural competence, diversity, and meeting the needs of underserved populations.
- Disability education can increase in provider knowledge, confidence, and comfort in caring for patients with disabilities.

Methods
- Mandatory ASD encounter for all 3rd year medical students at Ohio State University.
- Panels consisted of a facilitator (a developmental-behavioral pediatrician) and four to five panel members made up of adults with ASD and parents.
- Data were analyzed for panels discussions were conducted from April to September of 2013.
- Medical students were asked ten closed-ended questions about the training and asked to write a 100-250 word reflection using SurveyMonkey.
- Quantitative analysis of student feedback (N=99) was carried out using SPSS.
- Students' reflections were analyzed using QSR NVivo software.

Student Outcomes
- Quantitative Results: Survey Questionnaire
  - How would you rate the quality of the teaching provided?
  - What is your overall level of satisfaction with this learning experience?

Student Reflections
- "I found the panel to be extremely worthwhile, and loved the fact that people with autism were able to participate and lend their perspective. It is incredibly helpful to hear a first-hand account when trying to understand a developmental disability."
- "Seeing the spectrum of abilities and lifestyles on the autism spectrum was also educational as I had no idea of the level of differences among those with this diagnosis."
- "This presentation made it clear that it is crucial to form a relationship with the caretakers and family members of the patient as they can be valuable allies in understanding how best to communicate with the patient."
- "While I realize that my comfort level will only truly increase as I begin to have these interactions as a physician, this workshop laid a firm groundwork from which I can begin to build my confidence."

Autism Curriculum Guide
Check out our website for resources: Autism-med-ed.osu.edu

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