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Longitudinal Professional Identity Development Amongst Medical Students

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Abstract Title: Longitudinal Professional Identity Development Amongst Medical Students

Background:

Professional development is a core competency for medical student education. A standardized model for assessment of student longitudinal professional identity development will allow medical schools to better implement interventions.

Methods:

To assess professional development at a large, Midwest, allopathic medical school, a survey with seven statements regarding professional development was created. The statements encompassed domains of mentorship, communication skills, professionalism, and innovation and asked students to rank each statement from 1-5 (1 - highly deficient, 5 - highly proficient). The online, anonymous survey was emailed to all students (n = 1154) over a 2 month time period.

Results:

319 (27.6%) surveys were completed. Responses between year 1-2 and year 3-4 showed a unanimous increase in average proficiency across all 7 statements. Year 3-4 had a significant increase in overall proficiency ($p < 0.00224$). Responses between year 2-3 showed a unanimous decrease in average proficiency across all 7 statements and a significant decrease in overall proficiency ($p < 0.0234$). Overall, the students reported highest proficiency in their ability to work with people from different backgrounds and lowest in their ability to seek advice from mentors/advisors, particularly in year 3.

Conclusion:

Although professional identity development follows an overall upward trend, year 3 is a vulnerable period for professional identity development. While increased accessibility to advising is needed in all four years, it is even more necessary in year 3. The power of the study is limited by the number of responses.

Key Words: medical student education, mentorship, professional identity development