

Developing a Renal Teaching Programme for International Medical Elective Students

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Medical electives are a core part of the medical school curriculum and provide an opportunity for medical students to experience another culture and study medicine in another country. Despite this, there is little information available on the development of teaching programmes for elective students.

In view of this, an innovative teaching programme was developed for 21 visiting medical elective students from 12 countries who were placed across a range of clinical specialties in Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. Over the course of their four week placement, students were timetabled to attend weekly teaching sessions in the Undergraduate Centre. The first session was designed to allow the students to discuss their different backgrounds and educational experiences and encourage them to set some aims for their placements. The following teaching sessions delivered a renal teaching programme focussed primarily on acute kidney injury (AKI). The teaching sessions included interactive lectures, clinical skills and simulation teaching. Students were asked about any prior teaching they had received on AKI in their home institutions and pre- and post-teaching questionnaires were completed to establish the confidence of students across a range of domains. These included understanding of the risk factors, causes, assessment and management of patients with AKI as well as recognition and management of the complications of this condition.

The medical students had received variable preparation for their elective from their home institutes prior to travelling. The aims of the elective students varied greatly and included experiencing a different healthcare system and culture, meeting new people and developing their English language skills. All students had previously received teaching on AKI; this was delivered at some stage between the second and the final year of their studies at their home university. Similarly, there was considerable variation as to when students had their first patient contact, also ranging from the second to the final year of their medical degree. The majority of students (63%) had received teaching on AKI using a mix of modalities including lectures, tutorials and teaching on clinical placements. The remaining students received lectures only. Pre- and post-teaching questionnaires from the students indicated that their confidence levels improved across all domains following the teaching sessions on AKI compared to confidence levels prior to this. Feedback was positive with all sessions rated 'good' or 'excellent'. Evaluation of the elective placements demonstrated the value placed by students on the teaching sessions in not only improving their knowledge and clinical skills but also in developing their understanding of the healthcare system and gaining confidence. The teaching programme supported them in meeting some of their aims which may not have been possible otherwise.

In conclusion, the renal medicine elective student teaching programme allowed visiting students to meet other students in a protected and relaxed environment. The students were able to determine their aims and maximise the learning opportunities available to them during their elective placement. Finally, the students' clinical skills and understanding of AKI also improved as a result of the teaching programme.