

POSTER #15

Optimizing Case-Based Learning: An evaluation of tutor and first year MD student perceptions of group size and format variations

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Introduction: In 2016, Case-based Learning (CBL) was integrated into the first two years of the University of Toronto's MD Program. Since then, iterative CBL delivery revisions have included variable CBL group sizes: small (8-10 students) and intermediate (46-60 students), and variable CBL formats: patient narratives (detailed written dialogues between patients and medical students eliciting histories and physical exam findings) and case-reports (succinct patient history and physical examination summaries). First-year medical student and physician tutor experiences with these CBL formats and group sizes were explored to gain insight into their strengths and limitations for clinical skills training.

Methods: A mixed-methods, developmental evaluation approach using surveys, focus groups, and interviews was employed. ¹ Survey responses were reported as means and standard deviations. Descriptive thematic analysis was conducted for narrative data. Tutor and student focus group, survey and interview data were triangulated.

Results: Thirty-eight first-year medical students (14% response rate) and twelve physician tutors (15% response rate) completed surveys. Four student focus groups (n=28) were conducted. Three physician tutors participated in interviews. Students and tutors felt small-group CBL superseded intermediate-group CBL in fostering safe and engaging learning environments. Both groups appeared to benefit from combined CBL formats, recommended use of patient-narratives during early months of training, and highlighted the role of tutor continuity in fostering a safe and tailored learning environment.

Conclusions: Study results have useful implications for health profession education programs such as ours developing CBL curricula; recommendations can help promote safer and more effective CBL learning and teaching experiences.

References:

1. Patton MQ. *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*. 1 edition. New York: The Guilford Press, 2010.