

STRATEGIES TO INTEGRATE POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH POLICY INTO MEDICAL EDUCATION: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC HEALTH KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES IN MEDICAL STUDENTS

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Medical schools are currently shifting to increase public health knowledge in their curricula. We deployed a 50-question survey to the University of Vermont College of Medicine [COM], (Class of 2013; N=86, Class of 2012; N=81, and Class of 2011; N=69) containing questions assessing attitudes toward public health and questions assessing knowledge within four domains of public health: evidence base of practice, clinical preventive services/health promotion, health systems and health policy, and community aspects of practice. We identified overall knowledge levels between cohorts, attitudes toward public health practices, and associations between the two variables. Our hypothesis was that those who agreed with population health related approaches in medicine would score higher in knowledge based questions. Using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with number of correct answers as the dependent and cohort as the independent variable ($\alpha = .05$), there is a significant difference between the average number of correct responses between the cohorts ($F = 13.5$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). Average number of correct answers (out of 28) were: 2011=16.3, 2012=14.9, 2013=14.2. A one-way ANOVA test, (agree or strongly agree/disagree or strongly disagree as independent variable, number of correct responses as dependent), revealed a significant effect in which respondents who disagreed with increasing technology as the best method to address the growing number of individuals with chronic diseases demonstrated higher averages of correctly answered knowledge items: agree/strongly agree ($n = 88$) average 14.25 correct versus disagree/strongly disagree ($n = 148$), $F = 13.92$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$. There appears to be a statistically significant association between attitudes toward public health approaches in medicine and the level of public health knowledge. This suggests a focus on the importance of public health in medicine may lead to improved levels of knowledge and thus improved health outcomes.