

WORKSHOP REPORT

Leadership and Ethics Workshop for Postgraduate Students

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Context

Leadership and ethics are important elements in postgraduate curriculum. The Postgraduate Personal and Professional Development Programme was introduced to facilitate and coordinate training in such areas in the postgraduate training period. We describe in this article a leadership and ethics development programme known as the 'Leadership and Ethics Workshop' in our institution.

Reason for the idea

The importance of promoting and nurturing positive personal qualities and professional development among future clinical specialists and medical related experts such as medical scientists and educationists are becoming more apparent within healthcare. Studies have showed that these attributes have effects on the quality of care provided. This workshop was developed to enhance postgraduate students' self-awareness on the importance of leadership and ethics as well as to assist them in developing self-improvement strategies to develop their leadership qualities and ethical acumen. It offers a unique opportunity to develop students' skills in such areas.

Methods

The workshop was run over one day by senior academic staff members of the School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. The leadership inputs covered the styles of leadership and how those leadership styles should be applied in daily work. The participants were asked to fill in the leadership inventory to identify their own leadership styles. It gave them insight on how to improve their individual leadership styles. The ethical inputs review on the importance of ethics in health care and ways to breach the ethics. It serves as a reminder to some of the practice which may be overlooked in the daily clinical activities. Case discussion sessions were held to explore the practical components of leadership and ethics. M.E.R.C.I was used as a systematic, easy and practical

guide to help medical and allied health personnels in ethical reasoning and analysis in their daily work. At the end of the workshop sessions, the participants should be able to recognize their personal strengths and weaknesses, and develop their own self-improvement strategies to strengthen their leadership development and ethical acumen for the future.

Evaluation

A total of 18 postgraduate students participated in the workshop. Their disciplines varied from surgical and medical based, laboratory based as well as medical education. They were given an evaluation questionnaire and were asked to rate the usefulness of inputs given, facilitators and the discussion sessions at the end of the workshop. They were also asked to rate the success of the workshop in achieving the objectives and its overall usefulness. In an open-ended section they were asked to describe the most important thing they have learnt from the workshop. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 12. The evaluation showed that the participants rated the overall workshop as highly useful (88.9%) and as having achieved the objectives (89.7%). All sessions were rated as highly useful. Among the comments written in the open-ended section regarding the most important thing participants have learnt from the workshop, 25% wrote comments related to improved self-awareness. The importance of leadership and ethics was cited by 55% of the participants. Another 20% appreciated the usefulness of increased knowledge such as ethical issues related to healthcare.

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