

PROGRAMME REPORT

The Postgraduate Personal and Professional Development Programme

Muhamad Saiful Bahri Yusoff & Ahmad Fuad Abdul Rahim
Medical Education Department, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Context

The importance of promoting and nurturing positive personal and professional qualities such as handling stress, leadership and counseling skills among clinical specialists are becoming more apparent within healthcare. Hence, postgraduate medical training must be holistic in its approach and could no longer emphasis on building up knowledge alone. Studies have shown that it has positive effects on the quality of care provided. This article described a programme known as the 'Postgraduate Personal and Professional Development Programme' in our institution.

Reason for the idea

It was introduced due to two simple reasons which were to increase awareness of the impact and importance of positive personal qualities and professionalism to healthcare providers as well as to promote the formation of positive personal and professional qualities among postgraduate medical students as future specialists. It will act as a precursor towards sustainable transformation of future specialists' characters in such areas in the future.

Methods

It was conducted by the medical school academic staff. It covered the areas of stress management, emotional management, counseling skills, ethics, management, organizational, and leadership skills related to healthcare. The content was covered in two sessions, the duration of each being approximately three days. The first session covered the areas of stress management, emotional management, and counseling skills. Whereas the rest of the areas being covered in the second session. Practical and relevant inputs were given to the postgraduate students in the form of mini lectures (approximately sixty minutes). Discussion and hands-on sessions such as role play, small group activities, case discussions and group presentations were held to explore the practical components of the skills. After going through the sessions, they should be

able to recognize their own potentials and limitations, and find ways to develop their own self-improvement strategies to strengthen their skills in the future.

Evaluation

Thirty seven postgraduate students participated in the programme. At the end of the programme, evaluation questionnaires were distributed to the students. The questionnaire asked them to rate the usefulness of the programme, facilitators, discussion and hand-on sessions as well as the success of the programme in achieving the objectives. In an open-ended section participants were asked to reflect and describe the most important thing they have learnt from the programme. This evaluation showed that the students rated it as having achieved the objectives (89.8%) and as a very useful programme (91.8%). Most, approximately ninety percent, of the participants commented that it helps in increased their awareness and knowledge on the importance of the skills in relation to their future career. Some students commented on their initial skepticism to participate in this programme but later found it a satisfying, practical, helpful and a most rewarding experience. Concurrently they have also discovered some of their own potential and limitation that can be improved later. They are able to make use of the knowledge and experience gained from this programme to become better specialists in the future. In general, it was a well-accepted programme by the postgraduate medical students.

Corresponding Author: Muhamad Saiful Bahri Yusoff, Lecturer, Department of Medical Education, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 16150 Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, Malaysia.
Email: msaiful@kb.usm.my