

Abstract

Sustainability in practice: ScotGEM (Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine) students' quality improvement projects in primary care - reducing the environmental impact of health care

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Abstract

Introduction: ScotGEM is the first graduate entry medical degree course in Scotland. Students are viewed as 'Agents of Change', embedded in clinical practice and communities and, as such, are able to facilitate change. The Quality Improvement Projects presented demonstrate the commitment of the students (and their host practices) to improving the sustainability of health care.

Methods: The selected projects illustrated use of a Quality Improvement methodology: identifying areas of need; working with key stakeholders; collecting and analysing data; testing change; modifying changes; and re-testing. The overall aims are to improve the quality and sustainability of the healthcare setting and, ultimately, patient health. The duration of the projects vary from a few weeks to many months.

Results: Demonstrated through a collection of posters (some of which are published and award winning) from numerous projects. Examples include demonstrating a reduction in waste, a reduction in use of inhalers with high greenhouse gas emissions, and changes to consulting such as use of video consulting to the benefit of patients and the environment. The combined environmental impact of this educational intervention will be arranged via thematic analysis and the value of student agency will be considered.

Discussion: This collection of projects, many of which are based in rural settings, will demonstrate the innovative ways in which medical education can work with practices and communities to reduce the impact of health care on the environment.

