

The Challenges of Medical School as Told Through Narrative

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The Challenges of Medical School Told Through Narrative

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Goals

- To give students a forum to speak about their experience in medical school
- To share medical student experiences with faculty, community, and future students
- To facilitate understanding between students and their educational community and comradery between students across years

| Metric | Number |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Number of participants | 14 out of 15 |
| Number of in-person interviews | 5 out of 14 |
| Average length of interview | 10:49 minutes |
| Range | 3:40-18:40 minutes |
| Average number of words | 721 words |
| Range | 207-2092 words |

Results

- 14/15 SELECT medical student c/o 2015 participants
- Themes included finances, selection of specialty, classwork, and discrepancies between expectations and reality of mentors
- 14/14 students worked through their challenges when given an open-ended platform

Jun

- Proposal Submitted

Jul

- Proposal Narrowed with advisor

Aug - Oct

- Background Research

Oct

- Consent created and sent

Nov - Jan

- Interviews held and Transcribed

Jan

- Data analyzed and paper written

2014-2015 Timeline

Background

- Narrative medicine has been used as a technique to promote self-awareness among medical students as a means to help them become more well-rounded physicians.¹

“I think that the challenging experience in med school for me was running into an attending whose viewpoints dictated the direction of care that he gave.”

| Theme | Number of Students | Subcategories |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|
| Financial/family | 3 | Financial (2) Family (1) |
| Choosing a specialty | 2 | 2 |
| Classwork | 6 | SELECT (1) Preclinical (3) Clinical (2) |
| Moral | 3 | Being wronged (2) Seeing wrong (1) |

“It’s embarrassing to ask [extended family] for help and money. We had to write down every little thing to budget. I just felt like a child again.”

Conclusions

- Students share common challenges
- Narrative can be an useful tool to work through problems of both personal and systemic nature for SELECT medical students

Methods

- Six month project timeline
- Asked students, “What was your greatest challenge in medical school?”
- Qualitative analysis of themes and patterns within interview text

Discussion

- Best way to word question: open-ended or specific?
- Next steps: Seek feedback from participants and co-investigators, explore specific types of experiences in depth

REFERENCES:

1. Charon, R. (2001). Narrative Medicine: Form, Function, and Ethics. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 134(1), 83-87.

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