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Ten years of global faculty development in educational scholarship through the IAMSE Medical Educator Fellowship

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Background:

Over 30 years ago, the definition of scholarship began including the scholarship of teaching, addressing a decades-long debate over its comparison with the value of conventional research activities. The Association of American Medical Colleges thereafter defined educator activity categories and their forms of evidence for academic recognition. Nonetheless, health science educators continue to receive limited training in teaching and educational scholarship. Furthermore, the scholarship of teaching and their work is seldom recognized in promotion pathways.

Summary of Work:

In 2009, the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE) devised an innovative Medical Educator Fellowship Program, which fosters health sciences education scholarship. The Program places equal emphasis on teaching skills development and educational research using strategies to maximize application in participants home institutions. Three Fellowship phases are completed in three years: 1. The ESME course conducted by AMEE; 2. Two faculty development courses at IAMSE or AMEE conferences; 3. Project mentoring by IAMSE committee members, culminating in an international conference presentation showcasing the fellows scholarly work.

Summary of Results:

Since 2009, 53 fellows (54% female) representing seven countries enrolled in the IAMSE Fellowship. The Program encouraged proficiency in five content areas - curriculum design, teaching methods and strategies, assessment, educational scholarship, and leadership. A survey of fellows revealed an increase in perceived proficiency in all content areas with a doubling of those who rated their skills as very strong (from n=21 to 43) after completion, while a very weak rating fell from n=10 to zero. Almost 92% have presented their findings at a conference and 25% have published them in a peer-reviewed journal.

Discussion and Conclusions:

A review of the first decade of the Fellowship demonstrates that the program has improved confidence in implementing, studying, and disseminating findings for effective teaching activities. Future iterations of the Program will incorporate a greater online provision of content and mentoring.

Take-home Messages:

The Fellowship is an effective professional development program, supporting faculty in their educational scholarship endeavours. It offers participants a blended route towards externally recognized training and, ultimately, will improve the learning experience of our health sciences students.