Evaluation of short term attitudinal change in medical students following a teaching module on work and health

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To evaluate a teaching module on work and health for final year medical students by: (1) measuring baseline attitudes to a range of ‘key messages’ and (2) measuring attitude change after the teaching module.

Methods: The setting for the study was Cardiff University. This was a simple experimental study with one intervention group and one control group. The intervention group attended the teaching module; the control group did not. ‘Key messages’ from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine’s competency framework for medical students were used as the basis for development of a questionnaire. Data was collected through the use of a paper questionnaire for individual completion by both groups at baseline, 5 days before the teaching module. The intervention group completed the second questionnaire at the end of the teaching module. The control group completed the second questionnaire electronically, soon after the teaching module.

Results: Baseline questionnaires were completed by 152 out of 331 students. At baseline, students were generally in agreement with the key messages. 37 in the intervention group and 30 in the control group went on to complete the study. When findings from the two groups were compared, the amount of change in attitude observed to the statement: “Being in work can help physical and mental health” was found to achieve statistical significance ($p < 0.035$).

Conclusions: This study found the majority of students agreed to some extent with the key messages at baseline. A statistically significant level of increased strength of agreement was demonstrated to the evidence based key message: “Being in work can help physical and mental health”. This short term change in attitude was attributed to the teaching module on work and health.