

A Study to Evaluate Didactic Learning in a Family Medicine Clerkship

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Abstract

Background: As many US medical schools continue to revise their curricula and include more clinical experience in the form of ambulatory clerkships we would like to know whether more didactic instruction in a primarily outpatient clerkship will increase the knowledge and clinical management skills of third year medical students.

Methods: We propose a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the added benefit in clinical management skills of diabetic patients, for those students who receive a case based lecture discussion on diabetes in addition to their ambulatory training. The 144 family medicine clerkship students will be the research subjects and will be randomized by one month blocks into a control group and an intervention group. The intervention group will attend a case based lecture/discussion focused on the management of type 2 diabetes. The control group will follow usual practice and see diabetic patients in their preceptorship.

Outcome Measures: The primary outcome of student knowledge will be assessed by performance in identical pre and post tests given at the beginning and end of the clerkship. The primary outcome of student performance in managing type II diabetes will be analysis of a checklist of items that should be covered by the students during a diabetic follow up appointment with a standardized patient. Secondary outcome will be student's attitudes towards the case based lecture/discussion which will be assessed by evaluation on a Likert scale in addition to free text.