Cultivating Medical Education Research Mentorship as a Pathway Towards High Quality Medical Education Research

Reference:
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Tags
Clinical domain Scholar
Educational domain Education research

Background
Medical Education (Med Ed) research and scholarship is weak, in part due to poor funding and in part due to lack of research mentoring. This has even been noted by the IOM and in the NEJM! The lack of effective, consistent Med Ed research mentoring and mentor training constrains the development of education innovation and scholarship. Clinical research mentors are not familiar with education research methodology and context. Clinician educators lack research and mentorship skills.

Purpose
To comment on why there is a need for Med Ed research mentors, why we lack them, and how to move forward

Type of paper
Commentary

Key Points on the Methods
N/A
Key Outcomes

1. **Need for MedEd research mentors**
   - Research mentors are critically important to the success of junior researchers in any field e.g. having a mentor increases likelihood of grant and publishing success; mentors help navigate the challenges of design, implementation, interpretation
   - While core principles similar, there are differences between clinical and MedEd research: more emphasis in instrument development, different methodology, outcomes differ (learner vs patient). Clinical researchers may not be aware of types of scholarship or opportunities for MedEd research. Thus limitations if a clinical researcher mentors a novice MedEd researcher

2. **Reasons for paucity of Med Ed research mentors**
   - In many institutions the scholarship role of a CE is not recognized or supported (e.g. with protected time, academic advancement)
   - Little recognition of different routes to/types of education scholarship; the currency of advancement is still peer reviewed publication
   - Lack of advanced Med Ed research training (most programs emphasize teaching, educator skills, leadership)
   - Lack of doctorally-trained individuals who could mentor

3. **Opportunities and means to address**
   - **Initiatives to support MedEd research—engage a PhD educator**
     - Inter- and intra-institutional structures to encourage collaboration (e.g. Centres or Academies for MedEd);
     - Distance mentoring
     - Mentor training specific to MedEd research
   - **Initiatives to support MedEd research**
     - Local MedEd research training
     - Local seed funding for MedEd innovation and projects
     - Specific ethics review processes for MedEd research
     - Supporting MedEd research in residency

Key Conclusions

The authors conclude creating career paths for CEs to become MedEd research mentors is essential for the field to move forward, for “robust innovation in MedEd and their translation into patient care.

Spare Keys – other take home points for clinician educators

An article about medical education research that cites NEJM, IOM, JGIM, Annals IM and other clinical journals, Acad Med and Acad Psych (as policy journals) … as well as the Med Ed journals – this will reach a different readership.