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Beyond Google: Finding POEMS (Patient-oriented evidence that matters)

Background

Clinical questions arise frequently during medical consultations in primary care. Patients themselves frequently consult online resources as aids to self-diagnosis and self-management. Medical students should develop skills in identifying and evaluating evidence in reliable electronic databases, and in synthesising and summarising this evidence accurately to their patients and their clinical supervisors.

Summary of Work

We have previously piloted a module aimed at improving these student skills, delivered by trained librarian facilitators during the General Practice Rotation/clerkship. Students identify two clinical questions based on their experiences with patient consultations during the Rotation. They bring these questions to an interactive, hands-on session with medical librarians at their local campus, during which the librarians facilitate the students' individual literature searches. The only change to the normal module is that students will be asked for permission for the researchers to use their pre and post module survey data. Quantitative data will be analysed statistically, and qualitative data will undergo a descriptive and thematic analysis.

Summary of Research Aims

1. To measure student and librarian opinion about the accessibility and usefulness of online medical resources.
2. To measure prior student knowledge and new learning about searching for POEMS
3. To evaluate the module, and determine whether librarian facilitators are acceptable to both students and librarians
4. To describe broad thematic areas where students search for evidence about clinical topics.
5. To compare findings between Australian and North American UQ MBBS medical student cohorts

Discussion

This evaluation of the module may lead to changes to enhance its effectiveness, including the effectiveness and acceptability of using librarian teachers to deliver the module. Findings from the thematic review of areas in which students search for evidence may lead to adjustments in curricular content