

EVALUATION OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF DOCTORS TRAINING IN PSYCHIATRY IN THE MIDWEST OF IRELAND

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Background

The clinical learning environment(CLE) has been described as the foundation of postgraduate medical education, as it's comprise the social, cultural and material context in which trainees doctors learn while they work (1-2).

Professional satisfaction and patient care improve in a pleasant learning environment; where postgraduate physicians are encouraged, adequately supervised, and nurtured (3). A negative learning environment, on the other hand, can be detrimental to trainees' and teams' morale, as well as jeopardize the multidisciplinary working relationship (4).

Objectives :To measure the Education Environment (EE) of Psychiatry post graduate training in the Midwest of Ireland training Deanery; what aspects of training are working well and what areas are seen as not optimal.

Methods

This study took place between April and June 2021. A mixed methods approach was adopted, using the Postgraduate Hospital Educational Environment Measure (PHEEM) and semi-structured one-to-one interviews.

Results

- Response rate was 88% (n=22). The total PHEEM scores was (105.64±23.52) indicating a postgraduate EE with more positive than negative aspects, but with room for improvement.
- No trainee scored the EE as very poor. 71% (n=12) of BST and 60% (n=3) HST trainees scored the EE as more positive than negative. 12% (n=2) of BST trainees and one HST trainee scored it as having plenty of problems. 12% (n=2) of BST trainees and one HST trainee scored EE as excellent.
- Three themes were identified that contribute to trainees' perception of EE: the commitment of the trainees' supervisors to the role they play in trainees overall development, the clinical workload of the trainee, and the day-to-day working conditions of the trainee.
- Definite disparities between work placements were evident in the collected data across these three themes. The lack of consistency across the trainees' overall experience resulted in trainees feeling supported or not, which in turn impacted on their overall satisfaction.

PHEEM Subscale	Mean	Range	Interpreting the sub-scales
Perceptions of role autonomy	37.77	23-54	a more positive perception of one's job (29-42)
Perceptions of teaching	42.04	21-60	moving in the right direction (31-45)
Perceptions of social support	25.8	12-42	more pros than cons (23-33)

Discussion

- Compared to the published results of other training programmes worldwide, this PHEEM score is overall high, and among the highest on perception of autonomy and perception of teaching subscales .
- The Irish College of Psychiatrists puts emphasis on both clinical and educational supervision, and it is possible that this has led to a relatively high level of trainee satisfaction with these areas as seen in the PHEEM.
- It is notable that this study scored less than other programmes in terms of social support.
- Three recurring themes contributing to trainee perception of their EE: commitment of the trainees' supervisors to the training role, clinical workload and day to day working conditions .
- Trainees who worked in a positive environment reported feeling less stressed in their personal and professional life.
- On the other hand, trainees in a less supportive atmosphere, reported a considerable disruption on personal life and showed warning signs of burnout.
- One of the most important aspect that influenced participants' perceptions of EE is their relationship with their supervisor. This has been seen in previous similar studies (5).

Conclusion

Although the training program had an overall positive EE, specific answers and interview themes indicated some areas of weakness that may contribute to trainee dissatisfaction and possible burnout.

References

1. References are available from the author on request .
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