Reviewer’s report

Title: "Competence, Commitment and Opportunity: Views of faculty on Community- Based Education (CBE)"

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Reviewer: Myra Taylor

Reviewer’s report:

BMC Medical Education
Review: “Competence, Commitment and Opportunity: An exploration of faculty views and perceptions on Community-Based Education”
The authors have undertaken a study of an important and inadequately addressed topic.
Is the question posed by the authors well-defined?
“The focus of this study was on human resources i.e. faculty members; the study aimed at exploring the implementation of CBE from faculty’ perceptions and practices in context of institutional structure & systems and curriculum”.
There is adequate clarity regarding the purpose of the study.
Introduction.
The authors have identified lack of teaching methods to support CBE, insufficient time allocation, inadequate resource allocation and poor reward structures for community based faculty members and little commitment to CBE from previous studies.

Methods
Which theoretical framework did the author use for this study?
Are the methods appropriate and well defined

Study sample
The selection of the study sample requires more detail.
What was the total number of institutions that met the study inclusion criteria?
How were the six institutions selected – what type of institutions were excluded?
What was the criteria employed for selection of two public (out of how many), one armed force (total number?) and three private institutions (total number of private institutions)?

Study participants
How were the participants selected? How many participants were early career, senior faculty, or head of department teaching in the institutions? How many
males/females at each institution?

Study instrument

Interview schedule. The literature review identified many specific concerns. Were probes used in this study to explore these issues?

Transcription. It is not clear whether each of the audio-tapes was transcribed by the author, in addition to the notes.

Are the data sound?

This reviewer wondered at the sample selection or interviewer strategy in that nothing positive emerged. The reviewer is at a medical school where despite lack of resources, through the interest of faculty members many innovative approaches are being attempted.

Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

The authors have provided quotes to support the data presented.

Results

The results of this study confirm the reports from the literature review, but the authors “expected that training needs would also surface that might be useful in guiding evidence-based faculty development activities”

Were there any differences in responses from the nursing / medical faculties or differences by age/experience/sex of the faculty teachers? Were there any differences by city? Did none of the 65 participants offer evidence based approached that worked for CBE?

The authors explains important differences in the prior training of the faculty staff and this reviewer would be interested to understand if this understanding of CBE influenced their approach to CBE and whether this extended to improvements in their implementation.

This reviewer would like more information from the focus group discussions on how training for CBE could be improved in the current context, towards improving CBE? The study confirmed the reasons for CBE not being implemented well and in the short term the many structural changes that are required, are unlikely to all be implemented. Was there no information from any of the faculty members at any of the training institutions that could contribute to improvements in CBE?

Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

The discussion focuses on the data presented – but the authors “expected that training needs would also surface that might be useful in guiding evidence-based faculty development activities” The authors should thus in my opinion provide some more concrete/feasible suggestions, not only the “grandiose” challenges
identified.

Discussion

One of the advantages to qualitative research methods is that alternative points of view can be enunciated. In this study there is very little of this approach. The methodology allows for key informant interviews that could perhaps have contributed to alternative views. This reviewer knows little about Pakistan but the wide body of literature on Community Based Primary Care, could enable faculty to improve their competence. In the discussion the authors note that there has been considerable investment in faculty development but it appears to no avail?

As I was reading the paper I wondered about the history of CBE in Pakistan and would appreciate some background that could assist in understanding the current issues.

Recommendations

What type of faculty training is needed to assist in strengthening CBE?
Would targeted information for faculty/students assist in clarifying concepts and improving competencies, and lead perhaps to improved CBE? How could this be implemented?

Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitations of the work are not discussed – the reviewer has requested further clarity on some of the points above. The author needs to discuss the limitations of this work.

Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they have been building, both published and unpublished?
The authors have clearly referenced this paper.

Does the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
The title and abstract are adequate.

Is the writing acceptable?
The paper needs to be edited for English language errors