PRACTICE

Building a Practical Curriculum in Clinical Ethics and Responsible Research for Undergraduate Medical Students in Guatemala

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Private, secular university in Guatemala
30 yr-old School of Medicine
320 medical students
6-year program
Residency programs
40% complete residency in USA
Ethics Education at UFM - SOM

- Ethics has always been part of medical curriculum.
- Up to 5 years ago: single course in one year
- 2015: change to a new curriculum with an emphasis in ethics
- By 2020: courses in ethics to be taught in every year in the undergraduate program
The Challenge

- Historically ethics courses have been grounded on the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Course format largely didactic.
- Little emphasis on how those values are to be applied in the clinical setting.
How we did it

• 2014-2019 NIH Fogarty-supported training program in international ethic education and curriculum design

• Collaboration with US faculty from University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers University, and Johns Hopkins University

• Program goal: build capacity in research ethics education in Guatemala academic institutions.

• Our objective: create an ethics curriculum to help medical students use critical reasoning skills in addressing ethical issues they may encounter in their professional careers.
Our strategy

• Use existing ethics curriculum as a foundation to which educational activities to teach practical skills in ethical reasoning and problem-solving could be added

• Utilize an existing UFM system of non-traditional electives courses (LOGOS)
  • Two types of LOGOS
    • Pre-clinical 50 LOGOS
    • Clinical 50 LOGOS

• Pedagogical strategy: used active learning techniques

• Develop critical reasoning skills to help students identify ethical issues they will encounter in clinical setting
How we did it

• Two preliminary workshops
• Stimulate students interest in future ethics courses
• Illustrate the level of student demand
• Provided an evidence base to guide the development of a formal curriculum.
Curriculum Content

• Currently the ethics course includes six two-hours modules
• Each is a standalone unit with
  • Learning goals
  • Learning objectives
  • Assigned readings
  • A discussion case
  • Assessment
Curriculum Content: Teachable Unit
Shared Classroom UFM/Rutgers
Student Perspectives

Pre-Clinical
• Students have yet to experience or observe an ethical problem during training or working.
• All think learning about medical ethics is
  • important (58%)
  • very important (42%)

Clinical
• Students have encountered things that make them uncomfortable.
• Students finding talking about issues help them have the tools to resolve it.
Where Are We Now & Future Directions

• 80 students enrolled
• Course has been offered twice
• Meeting our learning objectives
• Because of student demand: additional units would be designed
• Two additional sessions are scheduled for academic year
• Shared classroom in the fall
• Will use the same pedagogical approach to design an ethical curriculum for surgical residents in Guatemala
Conclusion

UFM ethics LOGOS courses offer a model for transforming medical ethics education in undergraduate medical programs throughout Guatemala and the region.