

Title

Evidence-based healthcare contents in the undergraduate curriculum of health careers in Chilean Universities.

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Background

Evidence-based health care (EBH) is the conscientious, explicit, judicious and reasonable use of the best available evidence to make decisions about the care of individual patients (1), integrating the clinical experience and patients' values with the best available information(1). Achieving significant learning and skills in evidence-based practice is a desirable objective during the undergraduate training of all health professionals (2). In Chile, in the late 1990s some universities and private institutions created Evidence Centres, subsequently leading to the creation of the EBM Unit at the Ministry of Health during 1993, whose main role was to evaluate the evidence that supports the sanitary interventions to be included in the list of benefits of the National Health Fund (3). Although the inclusion of EBH is desirable and expected in any curricular model, the incorporation in the health careers programs of the universities in Chile is unknown.

Objective

To assess EBH contents in the curricula of undergraduate health careers in Chile.

Methods

This is a descriptive study oriented to the search, review and synthesis of EBH-related contents **included** in all the undergraduate health careers in Chile. We identified professional careers along the country at the website www.mifuturo.cl created by the Ministry of Education, using the term "health" in the "area of knowledge". After retrieving the list of careers, we analysed the curricula at the website of each university, identifying terms related to evidence-based. In those core curricula with a course on EBH, we extracted information regarding the semester/s and level when the course was taught and its duration. Whenever the curriculum did not specify any EBH course, a further analysis of the syllabi of the related courses was made to determine inclusion.

Results

There are 49 universities that offer health careers in Chile, including Nursing, Phonoaudiology, Kinesiology, Nutrition, Medicine, Midwifery, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Medical Technology and Occupational Therapy. The most offered professional title is nursing in 118 universities and campuses, in contrast to Pharmacy with only 19. Careers that explicitly include courses of EBH are: Nursing, Kinesiology, Medicine, Midwifery, Dentistry, Medical Technology, Occupational Therapy and Pharmacy. However, this inclusion does not exceed 21% of the total number of universities offering the career. The duration of the training ranges from 1 to 2 semesters, and the semester in which the course is taught is variable within the same careers and among the different disciplines.

Conclusions

The incorporation of EBH in the curriculum of health careers in Chile is uncommon, although there are careers such as Nursing, Kinesiology, Medicine, Midwifery, Dentistry, Medical Technology, Occupational Therapy and Pharmacy which have taken the initiative to include it as a regular stand-alone course. Considering the relevance of the knowledge and practice of the EBH in the improvement of the quality of care and shared decision-making in health, it becomes necessary that in the future EBH should be incorporated in all health careers.

Patient or healthcare consumer involvement

This research was conducted by a multidisciplinary team composed by health professionals and educators from different careers.

Referencias

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