

The effectiveness of Student 4 Best Evidence as a tool to improve Evidence-Based Practice competencies in undergraduate health professional students: a pilot study

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Background. Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an essential element in the delivery of high-quality care. In EBP, healthcare professionals make clinical decisions based on the best available research results while considering the preferences and clinical circumstances of their patients. Experts and international organizations have emphasized the need for healthcare professionals to possess adequate knowledge, skills, and attitudes for EBP. An EBP learning laboratory has been established at an Italian university to educate medical and other health professional students in the use of evidence in clinical practice and research. Students 4 Best Evidence (S4BE) is an online community of students from around the world, from school age to university, who are interested in learning more about evidence-based practice. As well as featuring a library of learning resources, the site also provides a platform for students to write their own blogs.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness (change in EBP attitudes, knowledge, skills and EBP) of an Evidence-Based Clinical Practice laboratory, using S4BE as an educational tool, to teach EBP competence to undergraduate students of Physiotherapy.

Methods. We are running an observational pretest-posttest study. The sample includes 90 students completing a bachelor's degree in Physiotherapy at an Italian University. The intervention consists of the use of S4BE to teach EBP competence. The evidence-based practice questionnaire (EBPQ) is being used to evaluate EBP attitude, knowledge, skills, and practice before the intervention, and at 3 months following the intervention. An intra-group analysis will be conducted.

Results. The study is still ongoing with final data collection to be performed in March 2018: the results will be provided during the Cochrane Colloquium 2018.

Discussion. This observational study will provide evidence regarding the effect of S4BE, as an educational intervention to teach EBP competencies. The hypothesis is that engagement with S4BE will lead to improvements in students' skills and understanding of EBP during their clinical training.

Patient or healthcare consumer involvement. Not applicable