

Do Saudi Medical Schools Consider the Core Topics in Undergraduate Medical Curricula?

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Background

Most of the medical schools in Saudi Arabia are currently evolving their curricula in accordance with the most recognized medical education trends worldwide. Undergraduate medical school's curriculum should be compatible with community health needs. Therefore, the study aims to explore the current contents of Saudi undergraduate medical curricula and to check if the core topics that were internationally recognized were implemented in their curriculum.

Methodology

An online questionnaire was designed and sent to 37 deans of medical schools in Saudi Arabia. The deans or the vice-deans in charge of the curriculum were asked to complete the pre-designed questionnaire, which assessed the status of inclusion of the core topics in the curriculum of their affiliated schools. Each listed core topic was evaluated according to five options for each subject: not included, separate required course, part of the required course, separate elective course, and part of an elective course.

Results

Twenty four out of 37 (65%) Saudi medical schools completed the survey questionnaire. Almost all core topics, such as communication skills, evidence-based medicine, patient safety, professionalism were included in the curricula of Saudi medical schools as separate required courses or as part of required courses or elective courses.

Complementary and alternative medicine and the history of medicine were the topics least taught in Saudi medical colleges, as 25% of the schools did not include them in their curricula.

Conclusion

The majority (65%) of the internationally recognized core topics were included in the Saudi undergraduate medical curricula. Evidence-based medicine, complementary medicine, the Saudi healthcare system, patient safety, and professionalism/medical ethics should be part of compulsory credited courses in all Saudi undergraduate medical curricula.