ABSTRACT

Hypothesis: Today’s physician is an amalgam: one part clinician, one part businessperson. In recognition of this truth, osteopathic family medicine residency programs are required to include a minimum of 20 hours of structured education in a variety of practice management topics, including risk management, payer mix, and coding. This study attempted to gauge the confidence of new doctors in areas of required business training and to characterize their postgraduate experience. The research team hypothesized new osteopathic family physicians lacked confidence in practice management despite current training mandates.

Method: An online survey was distributed to osteopathic family medicine residents and physicians on the ACOFP electronic mailing list. Using a modified 5-point Likert scale (“1” being least, “5” being most), the survey assessed their overall level of comfort with business concepts in medicine and in areas of practice management as specified in the “Basic Standards for Residency Training in Osteopathic Family Medicine and Treatment.” They were also asked to quantify the time spent on business education during residency and to identify the learning tools used to teach them. Inclusion criteria for analysis were attending an osteopathic or dually-accredited residency and practicing for 8 years or less.

Results: In total 208 responses were collected; 34% (71/208) met the inclusion criteria. Of those responses, 24% (17/71) rated their overall level of comfort with business concepts in medicine at their conclusion of residency as “1”; only 1% (1/71) rated their comfort as “5”. Furthermore, 90% (64/71) of respondents had received less than 20 hours of structured business-related education during residency. The most utilized educational tools included lectures, on-site training, and readings.

Conclusions: The results support the hypothesis that a significant percentage of new osteopathic family physicians display limited comfort with practice management in the face of existing training mandates.

BACKGROUND

- Previous studies have demonstrated that new physicians often lack confidence in their business training at the conclusion of residency (1).
- The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) require osteopathic family medicine residency programs to include a minimum of 20 hours of education in specified topics in practice management (2).
- Only a few published studies to date have attempted to gauge the success of a practice management curriculum on preparing new family doctors for practice (3).

METHODS

- An online survey was distributed to osteopathic family medicine residents and physicians on the ACOFP electronic mailing list. Surveys were collected over a 2 month period.
- Using a modified 5-point Likert scale (“1” being least, “5” being most), the survey assessed the overall level of comfort of physicians with business concepts in medicine. It also gauged comfort in areas of practice management as specified in the “Basic Standards for Residency Training in Osteopathic Family Medicine and Treatment.”
- The survey additionally quantified the time spent on business education during residency and identified the learning tools which were utilized.
- Inclusion criteria for analysis were attending an osteopathic or dually-accredited residency and practicing for 8 years or less.

RESULTS

- In total 208 responses were collected; 34% (71/208) met the inclusion criteria for analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

- A large percentage of new osteopathic family physicians show a low level of comfort with practice management at the conclusion of residency, despite existing training mandates.
- Residency programs often fall short in providing the minimum of 20 hours of structured practice management training.
- Educational approaches to teaching practice management topics where doctors felt most comfortable (i.e. “Coding” and “HIPAA Requirements”) may be able to be applied successfully to other topics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- This study has received IRB approval.

REFERENCES

3. Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine Department of Family Medicine.