



THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCOMING MEDICAL STUDENTS' LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH PRE-MEDICAL SCHOOL PROJECTS: A CASE STUDY

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Background

Leadership is essential for medical students since doctors are required to lead a team of professional healthcare workers. Previous studies have shown that extracurricular activities play a role in the development of leadership during medical school. In addition, medical schools are starting to incorporate leadership courses into their curricula. This study focuses on the development of leadership characteristics on incoming medical students who initiated a student-led pre-medical school project (RAdiator) **before the start of their journey in medical school, rather than during medical school.**



A **mixed-method design** was applied. Twenty-four participants who initiated and participated in RAdiator were given **questionnaires based on the NHS Leadership Framework Self-Assessment Tool 2012** which investigates the seven core leadership domains, asking participants to rate themselves on different aspects of their leadership skills before and after participating in the project. The percentage change in leadership skills was calculated. A **structured interview** was conducted with the top 20% of participants with the highest percentage changes, to further explore the reasons behind the increase in leadership skills.

Summary of Work

Summary of Results

The mean percentage increase in leadership skills was **39.0±25.5%**. The domain with the highest average percentage increase of 43.2% is **'Setting Direction'**. When asked about the reason behind the development in leadership skills, participants suggested that they are more willing to dedicate time and energy, when given the opportunity to lead a project in which they are passionate about. Barriers limiting them from excelling in their leadership skills include unfamiliarity with new colleagues and a lack of experience in systematic working.

Discussions and Conclusions

Involvement in pre-medical school projects despite unfamiliarity and challenging communication might push incoming medical students to step out of their comfort zone and try their best to become the best leader they can be in the opportunities given, therefore, significantly enhance their leadership skills.

Take home messages

' Student-led pre-medical school projects can potentially be an auspicious beginning to fulfill medical students' leadership competencies. '