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Medical Students' Perceptions of Ward Rounds in the Undergraduate Medical Curriculum

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Introduction: Ward rounds are widely regarded as an essential part of undergraduate medical training by presenting students with various tasks and roles they will need as future doctors. However, very few studies have examined this subject from the perspective of the medical students.

Objective: The objectives of this study are to explore medical students' perceptions of ward rounds and examine perceived barriers to learning and review possible strategies to increase the effectiveness of this approach.

Materials/Methods: The fourth-year medical students (n=30) at the Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital, Bangkok, attended five focus groups. Discussions were audio-taped, transcribed and analyzed using qualitative methods.

Results: The fourth-year students viewed ward rounds as being important for their learning and future practice. Wide variations in student experience were reported but ward rounds were felt to be under-utilized in the curriculum. Factors enhancing or obstructing student learning from ward rounds were categorized into three groups (instructor, environment and student) and administrative strategies were identified that could increase the effectiveness of this component of the curriculum.

Conclusion: The Medical students viewed ward rounds as occupying an important place in the undergraduate medical curriculum and understood that there were many factors affecting the effectiveness of learning from this exercise. While having to balance education with patient care, the Faculty of Medicine should consider management changes to maximize the benefits to students from attending ward rounds.

Key words: Ward round, undergraduate medical students, qualitative



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