

EP09.01

Exploring the knowledge and attitudes of medical students towards early dementia diagnosis and prevention in family medicine in the UK

Jonah Robinson(1), L Newton(2), C Dickinson(2), L Robinson(2)

(1) School of Medicine, Barts and The London SMD, London, UK

(2) Institute for Health and Society, Newcastle University, Newcastle, UK

Corresponding author: Mr Jonah Robinson, Barts And The London SMD, School of Medicine, London, UK. E-mail: j.j.robinson@smd13.qmul.ac.uk

In the United Kingdom (UK), there are 800,000 people with dementia; this number is increasing due to an ageing population. This has huge implications for healthcare, particularly for primary care who care for people with dementia throughout their illness. As there is no cure for dementia, current policy focuses on prevention and earlier diagnosis, with initiatives such as case finding in asymptomatic, high-risk patients introduced in England; care responsibilities largely fall to general practitioners. Recent research in England found medical students receive very little teaching on dementia despite its growing prevalence; however this study focused on their knowledge of dementia as an illness and attitudes towards it and did not explore emerging issues such as prevention and case finding. The aim of this medical student project is to explore if current medical teaching develops the awareness of medical students regarding: dementia prevention and risk factor modification, and ethical implications of targeting asymptomatic high-risk individuals.

We will survey a group of medical students from several English Universities in a range of teaching years using a short online questionnaire to assess their current awareness of dementia and its risk factors. The questionnaire has been developed based on the findings of a systematic review and recent research.

We will present findings from the questionnaire with particular focus paid to what research has already been done and other relevant factors to risk assessment in general practice. We will focus on assessing the current understanding of UK medical students and how a development in their understanding may improve the quality of dementia care, early identification and prevention, in the future.

The findings will help to inform current undergraduate medical teaching, improving the awareness and attitudes of medical students, tomorrow's doctors, towards dementia, and hopefully influence future dementia care.