



MEDICAL EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP CENTRE

Medical Education Scholarship Forum Proceedings

Teaching medical students rural community health in the field – An interdisciplinary approach

Bill Bavington, Janet Bartlett, Catherine Donovan, Community Health and Humanities

Background One of the objectives of the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University, is to train medical practitioners to serve the population of Newfoundland and Labrador with an emphasis on rural practice. Since the first medical school class entered in 1969, a major component of the first year curriculum in the Faculty has been the Rural Placement. The placement is currently a two week field experience in rural communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and more recently, the Yukon. The course provides community-based education from an interdisciplinary perspective within four components - community health, family medicine, ethics and the humanities. This poster provides a description of the MED1 Rural Placement course and outlines the results and implications of the course evaluation. **Objectives** The objectives of this study were to:

(1) Conduct an environmental scan of the literature concerning field experiences in rural community health for medical students (2) Describe the history and current structure of the MED1 Rural Placement course (3) Describe and discuss the evaluation of the course (4) Identify the lessons learned and future directions for the course. **Methods** A literature review was conducted to identify field experiences in rural community health for medical students in other medical schools in Canada and elsewhere. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse routinely collected student, faculty and site review evaluations within the context of attaining course objectives. **Results** The course is positively received by the students and very highly rated on course evaluations. While experiences vary across sites, overall, the activities of the course are very successful in achieving the course objectives. **Conclusion** The written and verbal experiences of the students expressed formally and informally are useful in formulating lessons learned and new directions for the course. The students highly value this field experience. Many find it a defining point in terms of their awareness of rural medicine and community health in action and their growth as future physicians.