

Medical Students' Views of Undergraduate Oncology Education: A Comparative Study

Mihalis V Karamouzis, Amalia A Ifanti, Gregoris Iconomou, Apostolos G Vagenakis, Haralabos P Kalofonos

Education for Health: Change in Learning and Practice, 2006, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 61-70.

Context: An ongoing concern of undergraduate medical education regarding oncology has been intensified in Patras Medical School, Greece, aiming at a more comprehensive teaching approach. **Objective:** A second-step research project was conducted to examine medical students' views of their undergraduate education in oncology, six years after the first investigation, and to assess the impact of the changes on the curriculum. **Methods:** The same questionnaire used in the previous study was again distributed to 210 different medical students. **Findings:** Our study revealed that although the quality of education in Oncology has been improved, it has not as yet reached high standards. The improvements over the last six years were mainly attributed to the increased presence of specialized oncology staff and their coordination with other basic and clinical scientists, as well as to the increased focus on research issues. Most of the students suggested putting more emphasis on psychosocial aspects of cancer care and ethical topics. **Discussion:** Despite the progress made in the curriculum, there is still a need for further improvements in the students' undergraduate education so as to meet current demands. Medical education in Greece still pays lip service to communication and ethical issues while remaining disease-oriented in its approach. Therefore, the target of undergraduate education in Oncology should not only be the provision of updated medical knowledge, but also the development of a proper attitude towards all cancer related issues.