Interventions to Educate Elementary School Students on COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

A partnership between a local elementary school and a medical school was created In Augusta, Georgia. Each month, a group of 5-6 medical students would spend a full day at a local elementary school educating the next generation on health-related topics.

Figure 1. Questions asked by elementary students

“Allowed medical students to share their passion for healthcare while allowing the elementary age students to ask questions, build their scientific understanding, and cultivate trust for future physician-patient interactions.” - third year medical student

GOALS

- provide elementary school students with medical student role models
- lessen iatrophobia amongst younger students
- medical student communication
- present evidence based data on COVID-19
- explain concepts in a case-based-learning format, helping foster real life application
- generate curiosity for the medical field
- education about the human body/healthy lifestyles

EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION

- Yearlong stem project was conducted at a local elementary school with the focus of educating students on COVID-19 and the importance of following safety guidelines for the community as well as personal benefit.
- Elementary students were surveyed for topics of interest, which were then shared with medical students

Figure 2. Interest of elementary students on different topics

- Medical students chose the most requested topics and utilized evidence based resources to deliver an oral presentation that was appropriate for the fifth grade level.
- Every month, medical students would attend the elementary school to present as well as lead fruitful discussions on the topic.
- Elementary school students were encouraged to ask questions

BENEFITS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

- early exposure to healthcare
- safe platform to ask questions
- formulate scientific questions
- empowering students to formulate own scientific opinions
- understanding the basics of scientific methods
- introduction to healthcare fields
- teamwork
- identifying reliable resources

BENEFITS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

- translational communication
- facilitate long term relationships with students
- leadership skills
- addressing common misconceptions
- Improving community health literacy
- Addressing the limitations of scientific knowledge

Figure 3. Elementary School Students' Progress

When surveyed, 93% of elementary students noted they would participate in this program again, and 96% students noted that they looked forward to medical student led instruction.

NEXT STEPS/CURRENTLY ONGOING

Elementary school students creating their own scientific question and oral presentation to present to medical students. This new partnership will continue for the years to come, and interview these kids in 2-3 years to see if there was an increased interest in medicine due to medical student instruction.

Figure 4 Medical Student Survey on their Progress

SUPPORTING LITERATURE

A study done by the New York University Langone Medical Emergency Medicine Department and local elementary schools in the New York area demonstrates the benefits medical students and elementary students obtain from such a partnership

[1]Hultgren A, Naik N, Grino A, Akala O, Wang C, Marie K. A medical school and elementary school partnership: Bringing medical education innovations to the local context of the elementary classroom. 141st APHA Annual Meeting and Exposition 2013.