

Abstract Title: The State of Nutrition Education in UK Medical Schools

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Abstract:

Background

Nutrition plays a significant role in decreasing the burden of disease in the population. Quality nutritional teaching is essential to allow clinicians to effectively counsel patients on their diet and nutrition. However, nutrition education at UK medical schools is not rigorously standardised.

Objectives

This study aims to quantify the nutritional teaching at UK medical schools and measure variation in teaching methods and duration.

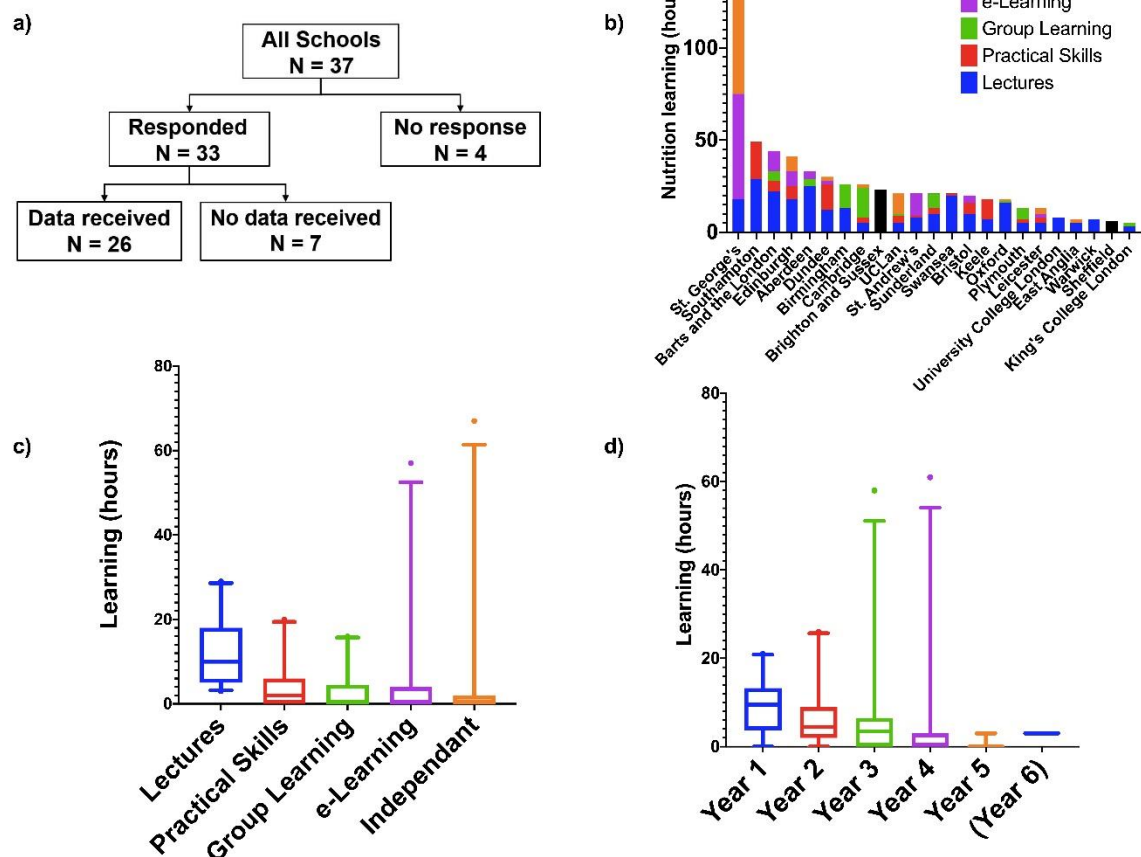
Methods

A Freedom of Information request was emailed to all public medical schools in the UK with programmes resulting in a primary medical qualification. Data were requested on how much time was allocated to lectures, practical skills, e-learning and independent study on nutrition. The lognormal and normal distributions were tested with Anderson-Darling, D'Agostino-Pearson and Shapiro-Wilk tests.

Results

Of thirty-seven universities contacted, twenty-six universities responded (70.2%), four declined to respond, and seven did not provide data (Figure 1a). The mean number of teaching hours is 26.9 hours (CI 95%, 14.8-38.8). Universities spend an average of 2.7 hours on group learning (CI 95%, 0.6-4.8) and 12 hours on lectures (CI 95%, 8.5-15.4) (Figure 1c). The mean teaching hours were greatest in Year 1 of medical schools at 8.7 hours (CI 95%, 5.9-11.5) (Figure 1d). Teaching hours follow a lognormal distribution (LR<0.001) (Figure 1b).

Figure 1



Discussion/Conclusion

Our study reflects the disparity in the quantity of nutrition education provided by UK medical schools. We believe these results reflect a lack of comprehensive curriculum to guide nutritional teaching in medical schools, as noted in previous studies. Research and analysis of student experiences with nutrition education would be beneficial for improving nutrition education for future clinicians. Further research to assess nutrition curriculum standards and evidence of student learning and application is recommended.