Enhancing Mentorship and Leadership Skills for Fourth Year Undergraduate Students

Presenters:
Associate Professor, Jan McKay, Department of Medical Radiation Sciences
Ms Rosemary Thompson, Department of Medical Radiation Sciences
Mr Yasas Botenne, Lecturer, Department of Medical Radiation Sciences
Ms Nagammal Nagendran, Clinical/Professional Fellow, Department of Medical Radiation Sciences

Abstract:
A disconnect exists between student learning in the clinical setting and working as a graduate (Maresse, 2015). Often graduates work independently managing workplace situations requiring leadership skills. The initial study aimed to provide opportunities for Fourth year students to develop leadership skills mentoring First year students during a clinical observation week.

Volunteers were from First and Fourth year MRS students. A mentoring portal using Facebook was created for each group. The effectiveness of the intervention was assessed through questionnaires for first years and interviews with fourth years.

Seven Fourth year students volunteered as mentors. The 56 First year students were divided into groups of 7 to 8 mentees per mentor. Overall, First year students felt reassured and valued the support provided by their mentor. Mentors saw the benefits provided to First years. Benefits for Fourth years were unclear. Fourth year students lacked understanding of workplace leadership and were unable to articulate their experiences in developing leadership skills. A gap was highlighted in leadership development of MRS students.

A current study aims to provide leadership development for 3rd year students who will provide mentorship to First and Second year students in practice laboratories as a part of their studies, after attending leadership workshops. Extension into Fourth year mentorship while on clinical placement is planned.