



Lancaster University
Medical School

Health Promotion in Schools project

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Background

NHS England in its Five Year Forward View has stressed the need for a radical upgrade in disease prevention and health promotion in order to ensure the future health of millions of children, the sustainability of the NHS, and the economic prosperity of Britain (NHS England 2014). All our Health (Public Health England 2015) has identified the critical need to ensure that healthcare professionals are more visible in prevention and population health.

The need for health professionals to develop health promotion and disease prevention skills is therefore of increasing importance to improve the population's health. This course aims to equip students with these skills by involving them in health promotion activities with local school children in their school settings. In addition there are secondary aims which include: developing teamwork and health information communications skills; embedding social responsibility amongst the students; increasing the visibility of the medical school within the local community; and providing visible role-modelling for those local children who may not have considered university, or medicine, as a possible future option.

Delivery of programme

Local non-selective schools were approached by the medical school to take part in the project. They agreed to the students delivering one (hour long) PHSE or science lesson, to year 8 pupils.

In preparation, students attended two half-day workshops on campus. The first covered the role and importance of health promotion and which topics may be important to this age group. They also discussed the challenges involved in delivering teaching to this age group and how they might overcome them. Towards the end of the session they began to formulate what activities they could produce. The topic chosen by the medical school was cardiovascular disease prevention and the students discussed ways to make the topic accessible to young people. They had timetabled sessions to work on their

lesson and develop the lesson plan before returning to the workshop the following week.

During the second workshop the students had the opportunity to show their lesson and received feedback from the tutor and their peers. The tutors (experienced local GPs) quality assured the content of their lesson and provided formative feedback and support during the workshops.

Students also attended a Child Safeguarding Awareness and Working with Children workshop delivered by UKSRO (UK Student Recruitment and Outreach).

In the fourth week students delivered their health promotion activity in groups of three or four during one lesson to Year 8 students in the schools involved. The usual class teacher was present during the lesson and was available should any issue arise with the pupils.

Learning Outcomes of Health Promotion course

- To understand disease process and the importance of health promotion and disease prevention activities in order to improve population health.
- To develop skills in planning and delivering effective health promotion and disease prevention activities.
- To develop communication skills in imparting health information - targeting different groups of people, especially young people and children.
- To gain first hand experience of the issues which face school children with regard to their health, and to develop a wider understanding of the social, economic, and environmental issues that impact on the health.
- To learn about the importance of the visibility of health professionals in the community in order to make an impact on population health.

Assessment

The student logbook includes a section on attendance, engagement and professionalism during these learning activities. These were completed by the tutor running the workshop. Full, punctual attendance at three workshops in preparation for health promotion activity was necessary.

Tutors assessed engagement during workshop activities and in students' development of resources for health promotion activity. Full attendance and engagement at school placements was also required. The form was completed by the teacher responsible for the class.

Feedback

Each student group (16) was asked to provide an informal email to the tutor to say how they felt their activity had gone. The tutor received 42 emails. All of them extremely positive:

“Thank you very much for this community health project, I thoroughly enjoyed it! Our lesson went brilliantly! They even wanted to stay longer to ask us all about university and life as medical students! This community project was so enjoyable and it’s really helped me to develop my confidence as well as give me an interest in teaching for the future!”

“Our lesson went really well. I really enjoyed teaching, it’s definitely given me a taste of what I could do in medical education and health promotion.”

“The medical school received an email from the teacher of the class saying that we were a credit to the medical school. On the day he also expressed how impressed he was and so appreciative that we took the time to come in. For this reason I think this part of the community course was really fun.”

Sharing with Colleagues and Future Plans

The course was presented to colleagues from medical schools in the north-west of England at the ASME North-West conference in May 2018. These included Manchester, Liverpool and UCLAN medical schools.

The course is now embedded within the timetable for Year 2 medical undergraduates. All 5 schools have already agreed to take part again in January 2019. Many have increased the number of classes they would like to be involved. There may be opportunities to deliver further lessons in other years, on different subjects e.g. mental health, sexual health, if curriculum timetabling allows.

The department could also explore involving colleagues from other departments in the medical school, or other local universities (University of Cumbria) e.g. sports and exercise medicine, nursing, pharmacy, teaching) to develop inter-professional team-working.