

Community based medical education – specific needs of elderly population

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Background:

Many countries in the world are facing problem of population ageing. As a part of medical education regarding that matter, The Community Health Course, based on line that main fields of work for physicians are communities, not physician's consulting rooms, has been conducted at School of Medicine University of Zagreb.

Objectives:

Students of last (sixth) year of study attend The Course through one week in rural and semi-urban areas of Croatia. They have insight in living conditions and needs of elderly population through participation in work with community nurses, family doctors/general practitioners and gerontology house helpers. Students evaluate activities by anonymous questionnaire, giving a grade (from one-very bad to five-outstanding) and writing a short description of experience. For the purpose of this paper we analysed student's evaluation from academic year 2018./19.

Results:

Very good and outstanding found 94% of students (N = 299) work with community nurse, 92% with gerontology helpers and 87% with physicians. The value of activities they described as: "we got an insight into functioning and organization of healthcare outside clinical hospital centres and Zagreb, we entered homes of people and saw how and in what conditions they live", "being able to participate in work with gerontology helpers and community nurses, first-hand learning, we learned a lot about community", "extremely valuable insight into lives of people in very difficult life situations and evidenced value of gerontology home helpers", "I saw differences of living conditions and health care between countryside and city".

Conclusions:

The results of evaluation showed students recognition of importance community oriented medical education, emphasising awareness about specific needs of elderly population.

Key messages:

- Community oriented medical education could motivate students to choose work in countryside areas in future carriers.
- Students recognized importance of community oriented medical education, emphasising awareness about specific needs of elderly population.