Ophthalmology teaching in Australian medical schools

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Abstract:

**Purpose:** To investigate the current state of ophthalmology teaching at Australian medical schools.

**Methods:** A survey-based cross-sectional study was conducted of medical students (MSs) attending medical schools accredited by the Australian Medical Council and prevocational junior doctors (JMOs) working in New South Wales Prevocational Training Hospital Networks. Data on the characteristics of ophthalmology teaching during medical school and participant confidence in basic ophthalmological clinical skills and knowledge were collected and analysed.

**Results:** 838 surveys were received. 406 (48.4%) were from MSs and 432 (51.6%) were from JMOs. The most common teaching method for ophthalmology encountered by both groups was lectures (65.5% MSs, 71.3% JMOs), while the most preferred method was hospital tutorials (61.6% MSs, 37.7% JMOs). Mean confidence in ophthalmology-specific skills and knowledge topics were not high for MSs (skills: 2.66/5.00, 95% CI = 2.55-2.76; knowledge: 2.88/5.00, 95% CI = 2.80-2.96), and did not improve for JMOs (skills: 2.52/5.00, 95% CI = 2.43-2.60; knowledge: 2.84/5.00, 95% CI = 2.77-2.91). Many participants voiced the need for more ophthalmology teaching during medical school, particularly clinically-oriented opportunities.

**Conclusions:** MSs and JMOs do not show high levels of confidence in basic ophthalmological clinical skills and knowledge, and report a desire for more ophthalmology teaching at a tertiary level.