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Home Room: a tool to identify medical students' difficulties

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Introduction: Medical students always experience some troubles during training. Many of them are not severe enough to affect their academic performance, so the problems remain unidentified.

Objectives: To improve identification of students in difficulties and to support the students.

Materials/Method: Since September 2014, we created "Home Room" activity, which every fifth year medical student was scheduled to meet a faculty staff in Family Medicine rotation. They had an approximate one hour one-on-one discussion about their life with their own family genogram, their motivation for studying in medical school, their future goals or career plan, their well-being and happiness, work-life balance, and any issues they concerned and wished to talk.

Results: Three faculty staff participated in the activity. Half of the fifth year medical students were included (N=85). Two students had GPA < 2.5 and five students had delayed their studies since they failed many courses. None of the students had incident report of having behavioral problems. Forty-four students (51.76%) had at least one problem. The most prevalent problems were physical health problems, family problems and lack of motivation. Student home visits were done in 2 families. Students perceived that the activity encouraged self-assessment, helped setting goals and personal development plans, and was supportive. Sixty-three percent of the students were very satisfied (score 5/5) and 32% were satisfied (score 4/5) with the activity.

Conclusions: "Home Room" activity helped identifying students' difficulties. Moreover, it encouraged students' self-assessment and development plan. It gained great satisfaction from medical students.

Keywords: students' difficulties, students' problems, student support



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