

BEME Project Report: Community Engaged Medical Education: Systematic Thematic Reviews (CEMESTR)

Rachel Ellaway, June 2013

Review topic and question

This study will investigate the interactions between communities and the educational programs that take place within them. More specifically our study question is: *“How do different relationships between medical education programs and communities impact educational and health outcomes?”*

Core Group

Rachel Ellaway, Roger Strasser, Lisa Graves, David Marsh, Cathy Cervin, and Patty Fink; all at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Canada.

Project status

Literature: We have completed the literature search step of the project. Different searches were conducted on each target database following their specific metadata schemas with later searches being evaluated based on the additional items they were retrieving. Having searched Medline, CINAHL, Web of Science and ERIC with a range of search terms we finally saturated the number of items that we consider potentially relevant to the CEMESTR project at 390. These range from peer-reviewed empirical studies to ‘grey literature’ reports and interviews.

The literature search proved to be more complicated than anticipated as it proved that many of the concepts we are looking at in the study, in particular ‘community’, were tagged quite differently in different databases. We are currently reviewing the search process and the instability in the key concepts identified at this stage.

Reviews: Our initial approach was to have each item reviewed four times – twice using the outcomes review lens and twice using the realist review lens. A significant number of the items we have selected for review are not empirical in nature and we will only be seeking realist review for those items. The up side is that the outcomes arm of the study may be completed sooner than had been anticipated. The down side is that we will need around 700 realist reviews to complete the study based on the current model. At present we have 29 volunteer reviewers in addition to the core project members – some of these have yet to complete their assigned reviews. We are therefore actively seeking to recruit realist reviewers to the project. From a BEME point of view this may mean that the study takes a few extra months to complete.

The online item and review management system is working very well, allowing us to provide reviewers with direct links to all of the review items. This means we can allocate items to reviewers who can then complete their reviews online. This in turn means we can then track all of our reviewers and their reviews in real time. At the time of preparing this report we are able to report the following:

Total items for review: 390

Items reviewed: 53

Outcomes reviews: 49

Realist reviews: 43

We will be presenting an update at AMEE in Prague in August.

Anticipated date of completion: Spring 2014.