RESEARCH ROUNDS

Monday, May 13, 2024
12:00 – 1:00pm

In Person: The Wilson Centre, Toronto General Hospital, 200 Elizabeth St, 1st floor Eaton South Rm 559.

Zoom: Please register to obtain link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0kfu6trj0vH9fLySRgZnyM3ZqBIrUYvTKj#/registration

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Negative, Uncomfortable, Harmful or Invisible? Examining Evaluation and Reporting on Less than Desirable Outcomes
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Abstract: Evaluation is crucial to enhance our understanding of the real and diverse impacts of innovative programs. However, evidence indicates that innovations are frequently implemented without sufficient consideration of risks. Furthermore, when evaluation is focused on verifying anticipated, negative, or unanticipated outcomes can be overlooked.

Our research examines the evaluation of undesirable and potentially harmful program effects within health professions education. First, we (i) synthesized evidence on current evaluation and reporting practices for such effects, followed by (ii) content validation exercise to help categorize such outcomes.

We conducted an Umbrella Review on systematic reviews of evaluative studies of medical education programs. Data pertinent to evaluation methods, reporting, and outcomes were extracted. We used framework analysis to analyze extracted data on undesirable or harmful outcomes. Finally, diverse subject matter experts participated in a content validation exercise to inform categorization of identified undesirable or potentially harmful outcomes.

Our findings indicate a general inattention to the reporting of undesirable outcomes. Undesirable findings that were reported included adverse consequences of innovations to individual learners to successful learning as well as to community and social groups.

Minimizing harms should be an ethical imperative for academic healthcare institutions. Our findings show that, despite the limitations of evaluation and reporting practices, there is evidence of undesirable or harmful consequences of HPE innovations to individuals and groups. Better guidance is needed on how to understand, evaluate and report on such outcomes and distinguish harm that should be mitigated from routine discomforts that may accompany learning within HPE.

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