

Improving Medical Student Engagement with Plastic Surgery: The Benefit of a Structured Curriculum

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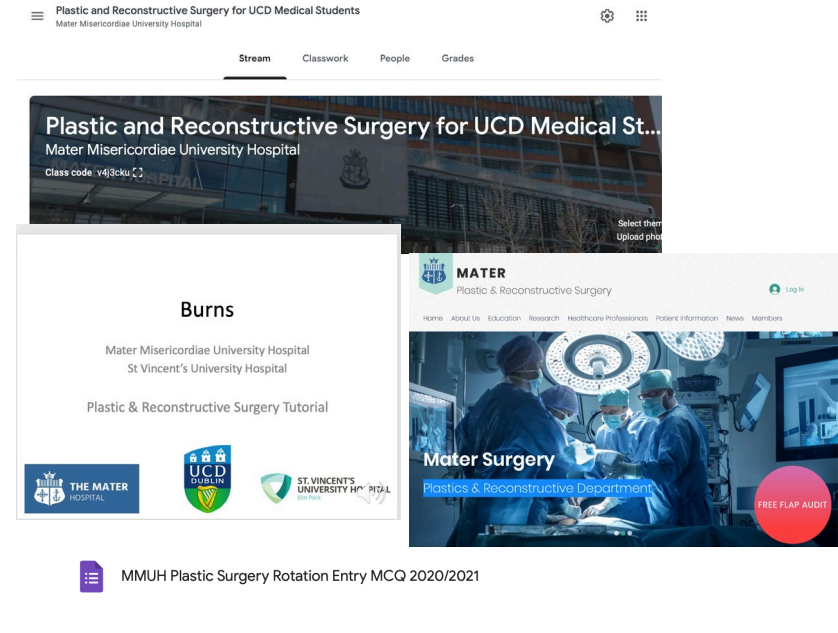
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Introduction

- Medical students are underexposed to the discipline of plastic surgery resulting in a lack of understanding of the wide range of conditions treated
- Emphasis on integrating plastic surgery into general surgery curricula internationally
- Early clinical exposure and engagement is the biggest predictor of students selecting a career in plastic surgery

Methods

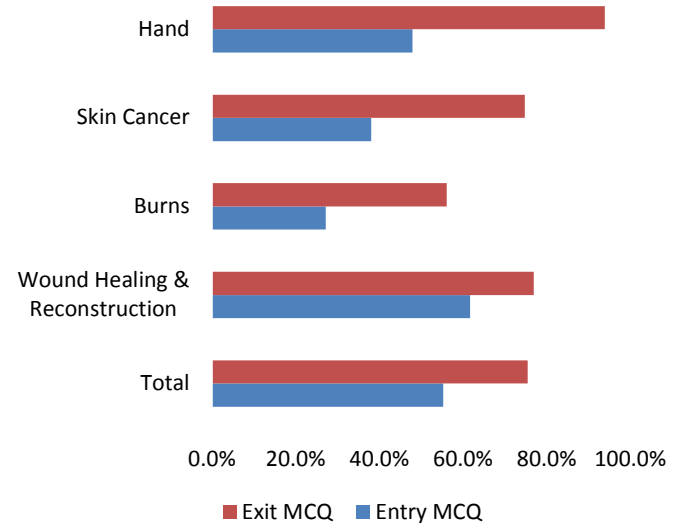
- Curriculum Defined
 - Wound Healing & Reconstruction
 - Skin Cancer
 - Upper Limb Surgery
 - Burns
- Virtual Learning Environment created
- Online lectures covering curriculum recorded and uploaded
- Weekly personalised timetables for rotation
- In-person tutorials covering core topics
- Entry & Exit MCQs
- Feedback at end of week rotation
- Small group feedback at end of academic year



Results

- A total of 101 students rotated through the unit during the year
- Entry MCQ completed by 100% (n=101) and Exit MCQ completed by 51.4% (n=52)
- Significant improvement in knowledge of core curriculum topics ($p<0.001$)
- Small group feedback (n=12)
 - Rated plastic surgery knowledge as significantly better ($p=0.002$) and more comfortable referring to plastic surgery ($p=0.001$).
 - More likely to consider a career in plastic surgery ($p=0.046$)
 - 1/12 considered before rotation
 - 5/12 considered after rotation

Average Scores of Students



Conclusion

- Implementation of a structured curriculum within plastic surgery rotations results in
 - Improved knowledge of key topics in plastic surgery
 - Increased sense of capability and comfort in referring to Plastic Surgery in future
 - Increased likelihood to consider career in plastic surgery after graduation

References

1. Agarwal, J.P., et al., *Medical student perceptions of the scope of plastic and reconstructive surgery*. Ann Plast Surg, 2013. **70**(3): p. 343-9.
2. Samera Dean, M.J., Nick Wilson Jones, *Factors influencing career choice in plastic surgery as a UK medical student*. PMFA News, 2016. **3**(5).
3. Almeland, S.K., et al., *A core undergraduate curriculum in plastic surgery - a Delphi consensus study in Scandinavia*. J Plast Surg Hand Surg, 2018. **52**(2): p. 97-105.