

Dr. Me: Student-led teaching of self-care and appropriate use of NHS services in primary schools

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Background

The current strain on NHS resources, particularly in General Practice and A&E, is well-documented. Patient education programmes targeting self-care and responsible use of healthcare services, such as Dr. Me, can improve patient empowerment and help address NHS demands.

Aim

The Dr. Me project aims to demonstrate that medical students can effectively educate primary school children in self-care strategies and when to access appropriate NHS services.



Methods

Medical students were trained to deliver Dr. Me sessions by a GP trainee. Four students led a one hour session for a Year 5 class (n=29). Teaching covered vomiting, sore throat and minor injuries. Six audit scenarios were

asked at the beginning and end of the session, in which the children decided whether to stay at home, visit the GP or attend A&E.

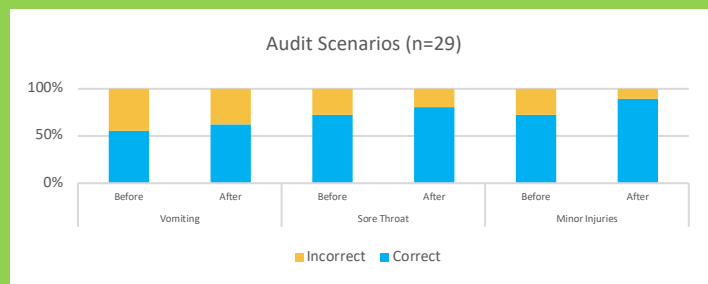
Responses before and after were compared. A feedback questionnaire gauged enjoyment and confidence in self-care.

Feedback questions

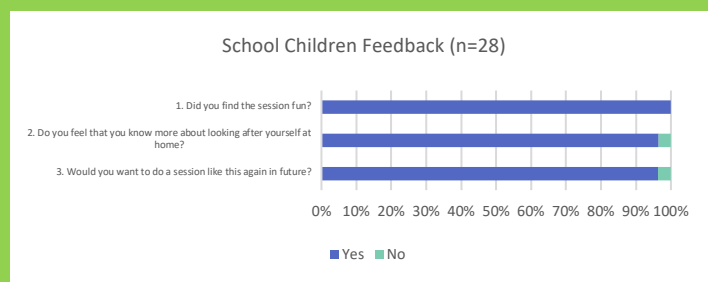
1. Did you find the session fun?
2. Do you feel that you know more about looking after yourself at home?
3. Would you want to do a session like this again in future?

Results

Correct responses after teaching improved by 10.7%. The vomiting scenarios improved from 55% to 62%, sore throat from 72% to 80% and minor injuries from 72% to 89%.



Feedback showed 100% of children enjoyed the session and 96% felt more confident about self-care.



Audit Scenarios

1. You have a bit of a tummy ache and have vomited twice today, you have been drinking lots of water but have only managed to eat a little bit of food.
2. You've had a really sore throat for 3 days, and you have been getting a high temperature, and you can only drink a little bit of water.
3. You were running in the playground and fell over, you have a little bruise on your knee, but you can still run around and play.
4. You have been vomiting 6 times a day for 5 days, and you are not able to drink any water.
5. You've had a sore throat for 2 days, you can still eat all your food, and you don't have a temperature.
6. You were jumping on the trampoline and feel off, landing on your arm, there is a big bump, and it really hurts to move it.

Conclusion

The results show that the session delivered by medical students was well received. The children's ability to select the most appropriate NHS service improved as a result of the teaching. This suggests that patient education in primary schools could be a useful tool in tackling inappropriate demands on General Practice and A&E. Future sessions are planned to further evaluate the impact of Dr. Me.

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