WISEGP

GEM
General practice Evidence for Modern day practice.

GEMs offer brief updates from general practice research tackling the challenges of front-line practice.

Not quite a doctor, but should I help? A qualitative exploration of medical students' attitudes towards responding to medical emergencies that occur in the public domain.

Jessica Ying-Yi Xie

The clinical problem tackled by this research

Medical students in the UK do not have a legal or professional duty, nor the same ethical obligation as a qualified doctor, to offer their help in a medical emergency yet they may have more first response experience compared to members of the public.

The majority of first response training that students receive is in the context of in-hospital emergencies, where medical resources are more readily available.

So what are medical students' views on, and experiences of, assisting in medical emergencies that occur in the public domain?

What this research tells us about the problem

- Students believe they have ethical and/or professional obligations to respond to medical emergencies, but they did not always feel knowledgeable or confident about this, and this related strongly to their prior experience and training.
- There may be a need for students to be reminded by the GMC and/or medical school that their ethical and professional duty as medical students is to act within the limits of their competence.
- Integrating students' suggestions on how to improve Medical School training into the current curriculum could address their learning needs.

The research team (*GPs)

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Suggested WISE action

Arrange a tutorial for your medical student, foundation doctor or GP registrar, during which you can discuss the management of primary care medical emergencies or reflect on personal experiences of assisting with out of hospital emergencies.

Where you can read more about this work

https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/9/4/e028035
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