

Knowledge and Attitude Towards Geriatrics Among Medical Undergraduate Students

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Abstract:

Health systems in Asian countries need to be ready to cope with the challenges of a rapidly aging population by creating specific geriatric training programs that generate “age friendly” junior doctors. This study was conducted to determine students’ attitudes and knowledge towards aging in an undergraduate medical program. 174 students from Years 3, 4 and 5 of the medical undergraduate program in Monash University Malaysia, participated in the study. The 18-item University of California Geriatric Knowledge Test (UCLA-GKT) and the Singapore-modified 14 item UCLA Geriatric Attitude Test

(UCLA-GAT) were administered through an online survey from July-September 2021. The UCLA Geriatric

Attitude Test scores of Year 5 medical students (Mean= 2.97, SD=0.31) was significantly lower than Year

3 (Mean=4.04, SD=0.33) and Year 4 students (Mean=3.99, SD=0.37).(p<0.001) The UCLA-Geriatric

Knowledge Test scores of Year 5 medical students (Mean= 53.20, SD=16.40) was significantly higher than Year 3 (Mean=44.21, SD=18.00) and Year 4 students (Mean=42.41, SD=17.14).(p=0.002). 33.4 % of study participants (n=59) were interested to take up a career

in Geriatric Medicine in the future with female students more likely to do so. (p=0.018)

Knowledge levels were found to improve with advancing level of training, while attitude levels were noted to decline. The undergraduate geriatric curriculum maybe effective enough to bring about knowledge retention, while, further studies are needed to explore the reasons behind waning attitude levels towards aging, as students advance in their medical training.

Keywords: Aging, Asia, Medical Education, Geriatrics, Undergraduate.