

'I will be able to put this experience to good use when I will be working in healthcare': A focus group study of students' experience of a mentoring program

Lea Pölczman, Márk Jám bor, Zsuzsa Gyó rffy, Gyó rgy Purebl, András Végh, & Edmond Girasek

Semmelweis University/ Institute of Behavioral Sciences

Abstract

During the extremely demanding training, medical and health sciences students have to cope with countless new challenges. The main goal of training healthcare professionals is to prepare them for their future responsibilities, and duties. The positive benefits and outcomes of mentoring programs are supported by international literature. Mentoring programs have been shown to be useful for promoting mental health and medical and health science education. The research aimed to examine what outcomes and potential benefits the students experienced as a result of participation in the near-peer mentoring program. This qualitative study was conducted between March and April 2022 at Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary. Twenty-six medical and health sciences students who were mentors in the mentoring program enrolled in five focus group discussions (FGDs). The FGDs were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized. An inductive approach was used and data from the FGDs were analyzed using thematic analysis. Two major themes were identified: personal and professional growth. Mentors reported increased problem-solving skills, self-awareness, and self-confidence. The mentors emphasized that the mentoring program strengthen their sense of responsibility, self-efficacy, and perception of their competencies and boundaries. In conclusion, participants strongly emphasized the personal, emotional, professional, and social, outcomes and benefits of the mentoring program. Therefore, the experiences gained during mentoring are important milestones. Students can be greatly improved both personally and professionally with mentoring programs, in order to become the best possible healthcare professionals in the future. Mentoring programs represent a great added value, so it is worth providing them at universities.

Keywords: health sciences, medical, near-peer, mentorship, qualitative