PULSE: An innovative peer-mentorship program at the University of Saskatchewan
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What is PULSE?

PULSE is the new near-peer clinical skills initiative that was launched by the University of Saskatchewan in 2018.

It features a semi-structured learning environment

• 2 second year students and 3 first year students per session
• Each session is one hour
• Multiple sessions per night
PULSE is rooted in Near-Peer Teaching

Near-Peer teaching has been studied extensively in the medical literature and has shown to be beneficial in many ways:

• Non-threatening learning environments
• Teaching and leadership opportunities
• Practice giving/ receiving peer feedback and assessment
Objectives

1. Explore the impact of near-peer teaching initiatives on wellness and connectedness using standardized and validated questionnaires.

2. Assess the effect of near-peer teaching initiatives on academic success.
Methods

Subjective Measures:
- Perceived Competence Scale for Learning (4-item PCS)
- College Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire (16-item CSSWQ)
- Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ)
- General Feedback Questionnaire

Objective Measures
- Deidentified student OSCE scores
Methods

- 66 First year medical students participated in the study.
- Of those, 28 (44%) had previously attended a PULSE session before.

Study Cohort
- 28 Students

Control
- 36 Students
Results

Quantitative Analysis:
• No statistical differences on the subjective questionnaires.
• No statistical difference on OSCE scores.

Future Plans:
• Collect data from subsequent years to increase statistical power.
• Stratify the analysis based on number of sessions attended.
Results

Qualitative Analysis:

• Students who participated in PULSE believed that it assisted them in achieving proficiency in the Communicator, Collaborator and Leader CanMEDS roles.

• First-years classified the learning environment as supportive and encouraging.

• One major theme derived from the analysis was the anxiety reducing nature of these sessions.
Conclusion

• Near-peer teaching is an established education tool that has been demonstrated to be beneficial for both learners and teachers.
• PULSE had tremendous turnout and feedback from 1st and 2nd year classes
• The quantitative analysis was hindered by the sample size, research is ongoing to collect data from subsequent first year classes.
• On the qualitative analysis, students believed that the program allowed them to learn in a supportive and encouraging environment.