

Response to “It’s a Win-Win: The Effect of Medical Students on Clinic Productivity”

Nicholas Anderson, DO

PRiMER. 2022;6:37.

Published: 9/19/2022 | DOI: 10.22454/PRiMER.2022.217454

To the Editor:

In “It’s a Win-Win: The Effect of Medical Students on Clinic Productivity,” the authors proposed that having medical students in your practice will increase clinic productivity. However, the article is lacking details about the medical students themselves. It is a disservice to students to consider them interchangeable and homogenous. Characteristics and capabilities will vary from student to student and these differences can affect their clinical performance and productivity.

To know the generalizability of medical students’ effect on clinic productivity, it is important to know the characteristics of the students. Important details include their medical school year, what rotations they have completed, what field they are interested in, how well they have been performing on rotations, and even how many patients they were seeing in the clinic. There are knowledge gaps between third- and fourth-year medical students.^{1,2} A medical student who has been through a specific rotation before would likely be more knowledgeable and efficient when they rotate through that field again. Someone with a vested interest in a field would be more knowledgeable and more efficient in their time.³ Different levels of training affect timeliness and efficiency⁴ as well as competence in performing examination skills.⁵ Students who have always done well in the past would likely continue to excel in their capabilities and clinical performance. Lastly, a student who only sees one patient is going to have a different effect on clinic productivity than one who sees all the patients in the given day. There is great heterogeneity among medical students and this can have various levels of impact in the clinic.

It is important that more details on the characteristics of the medical students are included when determining their effect on the clinic. Productivity would likely vary depending upon the type and capabilities of various students. Further research concerning medical students should consider their heterogeneity and investigate their effect on aspects of the clinic that are even more important than just productivity.

Author Affiliations

Nicholas Anderson, DO - OhioHealth Dublin Family Medicine Residency, Dublin, OH

References

1. Saleem T, Khalid U, Ishaque S, Zafar A. Knowledge, attitudes and practices of medical students regarding needle stick injuries. *J Pak Med Assoc.* 2010;60(2):151-156.
2. Ali MB, Warda T, Raza FZ, et al. Knowledge and attitudes about burn complications in medical students. *Burns.* 2020;46(4):876-881. doi:10.1016/j.burns.2019.10.002

3. Zairi I, Ben Dhiab M, Mzoughi K, Ben Mrad I, Kraiem S. Assessing medical student satisfaction and interest with serious game. *Tunis Med.* 2021;99(11):1030-1035.
4. DeLaney M, Zimmerman KD, Strout TD, Fix ML. The effect of medical students and residents on measures of efficiency and timeliness in an academic medical center emergency department. *Acad Med.* 2013;88(11):1723-1731. doi:10.1097/ACM.0b013e3182a7f1f8
5. Lippa LM, Boker J, Duke A, Amin A. A novel 3-year longitudinal pilot study of medical students' acquisition and retention of screening eye examination skills. *Ophthalmology.* 2006;113(1):133-139. doi:10.1016/j.ophtha.2005.09.003

Copyright © 2022 by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine