

Letter to editor

Gender Mainstreaming in Medical Education- A Feedback from Medical Educators

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Abstract:

Methods: This paper discusses the feedback gathered from 22 senior medical educators who participated in the three days workshop to sensitize them about ways in which gender influences health. Five outcome parameters; viz. their expectations, course material, logistics, duration of the course and additional inputs required are discussed.

Results and Conclusion: There were suggestions to include topics on masculinity, adolescent sexuality and transgender issues. Most of them felt that the workshop had made a difference to them, sensitized them and would facilitate working as change agents. Regular follow up with participants and conducting periodical workshops was a felt need.

22 senior medical educators (12 females and 10 males) from six Government Medical Colleges of Gujarat were deputed by the state government to participate in the workshop. The workshop was divided into three modules; Concept, Application and Advocacy and was spread over three days. The main topics covered were; gender as social determinant of health, concepts and tools for gender analysis in health, rights based approach to health, masculinity and sexuality, gender based violence, and applying gender analysis to health information.

A semi structured questionnaire that included open-ended questions was designed by experts to get feedback from participants regarding the workshop at the end of third and last day.

We observed that, out of the 22 participants, 16 felt that their expectations were met adequately. Almost all participants were satisfied with the overall balance of topics and materials in the course; however a few felt that repetitions could be avoided at places. They mentioned the sessions in order of usefulness as; 1) Applying gender analysis to health information. 2) Rights based approach to health. 3) Integrating a gender & rights perspective in health care system. 4) Gender & Sexuality. 5) Gender as a social construction, Gender in STD / HIV. 6) Gender bias in research & Medical ethics.

Majority of the participants felt that the facilitators had good interaction and tried their best to make the sessions participatory. When asked, do you think there are any ways in which the course has

Sir,

Women and men may respond differently to treatment, have different access to health care and be treated differently by health providers^{1,2}. Female patients often feel disappointed in their encounters with health care.³ It is medical education and training that informs individual practice and the delivery of health services. Teachers are weighty messengers not to be ignored when planning interventions and changes in medical education. We report feedback gathered from the participants of a state level workshop organized by department of Preventive and Social Medicine (PSM), of a Medical College of Gujarat state, located in western India. The objective being; to sensitize medical educators to ways in which gender influences health.

changed you? One participant had put it like this, *“I was doing something related to gender issues subconsciously but now I shall consciously make more efforts in this direction. Others said, we can see gender as one of the factors & we can now bring in changes in ourselves, family and community. We have been sensitized to gender issues in medical research and shall do our best to integrate and implement gender issues in our day to day practice”*. It has provided us with a different angle to look at. As said by one, *“It has made us aware to be “tender at gender”, at personal level & professional level”*.

To conclude, the feedback given by participants helped identify their expectations and it is interesting to note

that majority of them expressed that the expectations were met adequately. Majority of the participants felt that all the sessions were valuable and useful. It is important to note that most of them felt that the workshop had made a difference to them in one way or the other to enable them to work as change agents.

References:

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“Fixing health care and fixing the economy are two sides of the same coin.”

Ron Wyden

The bottom line is that the human body is complex and subtle, and oversimplifying - as common sense sometimes impels us to do - can be hazardous to your health.

Andrew Weil

“Having good health, being able to breathe and be happy, that's one of the most beautiful gifts.. I'm just telling you from my heart, I'm so in love with life. “

Roy Ayers