

Using Mentees' Feedback to Improve a Mentoring Program in a South African Medical School

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ABSTRACT This was a survey aimed at exploring whether a student-mentor training which was modified through mentee-feedback caused significant differences on mentees' views on student-mentor attributes. Two questionnaire surveys, one each at the end of two successive years' mentoring programs were administered to gather the views of two cohorts of MBChB first year mentees on some selected quality attributes of their senior student-mentors. The first set of data served as feedback to improve student-mentor training. The comparison and contrast between the first and second sets served to evaluate the effectiveness of the modified student-mentor training. The results on mentees' views showed statistically significant improvements on some attributes such as mentor initiative to meet mentees, mentor-availability, mentor-honouring of appointments, mentor-mentee relationship and mentor-commitment to mentees. Although 100% overall mentee satisfaction remains as the mentoring program's target, 91% and 98% of mentees were satisfied in 2008 and 2009 respectively despite no significant statistical difference on some other student-mentor attributes. The study concluded that interventions based on the feedback from the 2008 views made noticeable improvements on the mentees' views on student-mentor attributes in 2009. Continuously improved student-mentor training may be useful for all new university student-entrants, especially those from disadvantaged social and academic backgrounds, but that cannot be generalized from these results from one medical school. Further research on improving mentoring programs based on continuous feedback and review of student-mentor training across higher education institutions is recommended to facilitate additional insights to improve student mentoring programs in general, and those for new medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular.