A Student-Generated, Peer-Led Teaching Activity for Integrative Medicine in a Family Medicine Accelerated Track

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FMAT Program:
TTUHSC has implemented a 3-year accelerated medical school curriculum that culminates in the MD degree and prepares students for a 3-year family medicine residency. The FMAT1 course focuses on the top 24 diagnoses in primary care. It is organized across 8 systems-based weeks.

Project Background & Purpose:
More than half of adults in the U.S. say they use some form of alternative medicine. However, the definition of terms such as Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) and Integrative Medicine (IM) change often, as CAM/IM therapies move into the mainstream. Thus, helping learners stay abreast of CAM/IM therapies remains a part of lifelong learning.

Project Objectives:
1) Apply basic sciences and clinical content covered in the course to CAM and integrative therapies
2) Demonstrate clinical competencies that apply to the basic science and clinical content covered during FMAT systems-based weeks
3) Demonstrate critical thinking and synthesis of information.

Methods:
• FMAT students studied evidence related to the use of CAM/IM in primary care.
• Students and faculty completed pre- and post-tests of knowledge and attitude, including matching therapies to indications and CAM confidence.
• In their assigned week, students were responsible for researching and presenting about CAM/IM therapies.
• Each student gave a brief presentation for 2 therapies, including one nutritional supplement, noting indications, drug interactions, MOA, sex-differences, safety issues, etc.
• Students completed worksheets and wrote a post-test question.

Discussion & Conclusions
In the Family Medicine Accelerated Track (FMAT), TTUHSC has developed a unique strategy to improve the primary care physician workforce. FMAT affords students a complete medical education in three years, increased faculty support, financial incentives, and earlier clinical experiences. This project offered a strong opportunity to:
• Embed a self-directed learning activity into an ongoing course
• Address CAM/IM therapies, which are often not taught well in medical school
• Challenge students to integrate CAM with the week’s content & diagnoses
• Use physician & scientist faculty expertise to guide discussions such as therapy MOA, drug interaction, potential for mis-information, safety, & sex differences
• Engage students directly in teaching & evaluation
• Pilot a model that can be expanded to other topics and courses

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