The NICE Evidence Search Student Champion Scheme: training peers to value evidence-based dentistry through NICE Evidence Search

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Background
The NICE Evidence Search Student Champion Scheme is a national programme which aims to improve the routine use of evidence-based information by future health and social care professionals. It uses a peer-to-peer teaching model focussing on the NICE Evidence Search¹ web portal.

Bristol Dental School has worked directly with NICE on the scheme since 2013. The training is placed in Year 2 of the dental curriculum, where it links to the Year 2 Research Methods Element by introducing the hierarchy of evidence and systematic review. This is prior to student engagement with a “library project” in Oral Biology, for which the students receive training from University subject librarians in literature searching using Web of Science and Medline databases, and training in Critical Appraisal in Year 3.

Method
• Year 2 students are invited to take on the role of NICE Champion.
• Successful applicants complete a pre-survey to enable the joint NICE / Bristol team to develop and facilitate an interactive bespoke workshop to enable Champions to peer-teach on the use of Evidence Search.

Results
Through Student Champion reports, NICE gained feedback on Evidence Search from the perspective of dental students. Students thought the site could be more dentistry specific. Some said they would like BDJ Evidence Based Dentistry to be part of the content, and for Clinical Knowledge Summaries to contain more dental topics. Students also commented on good example searches that could be used in future NICE Champion training sessions.

Student Champions indicated the training day could be shorter and focus on use of the British National Formulary (BNF), keywords and filtering. In 2015-16, the session was shortened to a half-day and focussed as suggested by the students.

While benefits to the Student Champions were evident, NICE received few responses to a post-session survey from students who participated in the student-led training.

NICE Evidence Search Champion Training Workshops
• Students explore Evidence Search to answer a series of clinical questions, for example:

  What is the current advice for dental patients who are on Pradaxa® and require extraction of a tooth? Why is this important?

  What guidance is available on dentine sensitivity?

  Is whitening detrimental to the health of the tooth / strength of the tooth material?

• Students learn to access high quality consolidated professional and patient-targeted information
• Student Champions are given training in facilitation of teaching sessions.
• The workshop and online support tools enable Champions to cascade their learning to their peers in hands-on, structured timetable sessions.

Conclusions and future directions
Student Champions reported the scheme allowed them to:
- improve understanding of NICE Evidence Search / NICE
- gain teaching experience and grow in confidence
- improve communication skills
- develop team working skills
They also reported it to be enjoyable and rewarding.

Two past Student Champions highlighted the need to further embed and signpost NICE Evidence Search and EBD. To support this:
• two Year 4 students are preparing to make an e-tutorial as their Elective project
• EBD will be further signposted after the peer teaching and more firmly embedded into the revised dental curriculum.

¹https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/