



ABSTRACT - BERA Researching Medical Education: a forum for exploring practice

Title: Professionalising the role of Educational and Clinical Supervisors

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Abstract

Background

The quality of medical practice is critically dependent upon the quality of medical education. In August 2012, The General Medical Council (GMC) published an implementation plan for recognising and approving trainers which recommended the formal recognition of medical trainers in secondary care. In a move to promote high standards of postgraduate education and training in Wales and to support the GMC's implementation plan, the Wales Deanery introduced the Educational Supervision Agreement (EdSA). This tripartite agreement, signed by Educational Supervisors, their Local Education Provider (LEP; the Health Board or Trust, i.e. the Medical Director); and the Wales Deanery (the Postgraduate Dean). To date 1237 Agreements have been signed.

Methodology and Method

We undertook formative evaluation the roll-out of the EdSA across Wales (2013-2015). Using a mixed-methods approach, we gathered a multi-perspective view of the Agreement from questionnaires (n=191), interviews (n=11) with Educational Supervisors and discussion with key stakeholders (GMC, All-Wales Trainer Recognition Group, Clinical Directors). We report questionnaire data here. Questionnaires were distributed at three Trainer and Educator Development Days (TEDDs) (Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham) between October and December 2014. Quantitative data were statistically analysed in SPSS; open comments underwent thematic content analysis.

Results

The 191 respondents represented 14% of the total population of signed EdSAs and 36% of TEDD attendees. Respondents reported) that the Agreement professionalises the role of Educational Supervisors (85%, n=159 agree/strongly agree), ensures better access to educational training (71%, n=131), does not deter 'good' trainers from becoming supervisors (77%, n=143), provides leverage in negotiating time for 'supporting professional activities' (SPA) in job planning (76%, n=142), and that the agreement was not just a 'tick box' exercise (74%, n=136). However, there were concerns about the ability of the Agreement to sift out poor trainers and whether it would be properly enforced and policed. Open comments volunteered robust and no nonsense approaches to upholding quality and accountability of Educational Supervisors and LEPs: 'publish names of those trainers who have not signed Agreement, and remove SPA time from them', 'the accountability of

programme directors and educational supervisors should be cross-checked regularly by talking to their colleagues’.

Conclusions – impact on practice

The Educational Supervision Agreement, for the most part, is being well received in Wales. The evidence suggests that the Agreement contributes to role recognition and role professionalization which will enhance the quality of educational supervision.