

Impact of a capstone assistant Internship program on students' confidence in performing as interns

Paul BS LAI¹, Kenneth Tsang², Henry Chan¹, Shekhar Kumta¹

¹ Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

² Hospital Authority, Hong Kong



Background

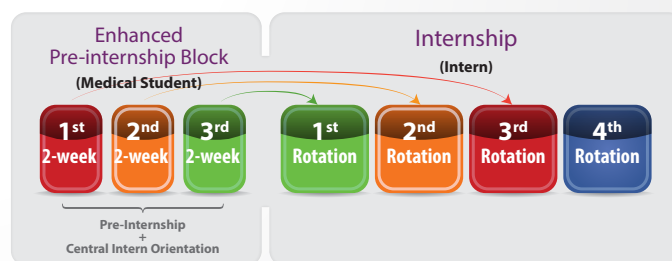
Transition from medical student to interns is a huge quantum leap. An Assistant Internship (AI) Program aiming to provide medical students with an unique opportunity to acquire knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary for them to become safe and competent interns, was organized for the final years students at CUHK in 2015/2016. After this pilot program, the arrangement was proposed together with HKU to the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong. The program was later renamed as Enhanced Pre-internship Block and the final year students of both CUHK and HKU were enrolled in the program in 2016/17 before starting their internship training in 1 July 2017.

Summary of Work

To allow student AIs to familiarize themselves with their future work environment, including units where they desire to subsequently receive their internship training, the student AIs from both CUHK and HKU were rotated to clinical units based on the first three rotations of their subsequent internship posting per standard allocation exercise in 2016-2017. During the Enhanced Pre-internship Block, student AIs would also attend sessions of Central Intern Orientation Program of the HA in June 2017. The 6-week Enhanced Pre-internship Block was scheduled from 15 May 2017 to 23 June 2017.

Period 15 May 2017 – 23 June 2017 (6-week)

Student AI allocation
 1st 2-week - follow the 3rd rotation of intern proposed allocation
 2nd 2-week - follow the 2nd rotation of intern proposed allocation
 3rd 2-week - follow the 1st rotation of intern proposed allocation



Student AIs remain under the guidance and governance of both Universities. Each student AI is assigned to shadow one intern in the department while supervision is provided by medical officers assigned by either the departmental intern coordinator or Chief of Services (COS). Intern coordinators will help evaluate the performance of student AIs in consultation with relevant team members in the department. The COS in each department will be overseeing the entire process. The student AIs are required to record their daily activities in an electronic logbook and submit it to the supervisors, and to intern coordinators for endorsement. The report and evaluation of the student AIs will be submitted to their respective Universities at the end of the Enhanced Pre-internship Block for evaluation.

Summary of Results

Feedbacks were collected through anonymous questionnaire after they have completed the Enhanced Pre-internship Block and after the 1st rotation of their internship training. The questionnaire has adopted a 5-point Likert scale (i.e. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree).

Upon completion of Enhanced Pre-internship Block

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. The arrangement of Enhanced Pre-internship Block has helped to prepare me to become a competent intern.	1	6	32	92	72	4.12
2. The Enhanced Pre-internship Block has enhanced my confidence to work as an intern.	1	1	31	93	77	4.2
3. The supervision by interns/resident during the Enhanced Pre-internship Block is adequate.	1	1	36	90	75	4.17
4. Overall, I feel satisfied with the Enhanced Pre-internship Block.	2	9	33	92	67	4.05

5-month into their internship

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. The arrangement of Enhanced Pre-internship Block has helped to prepare me to become a competent intern.	0	5	18	36	22	3.93
2. The Enhanced Pre-internship Block has enhanced my confidence to work as an intern.	0	5	15	39	22	3.96
3. The supervision by interns/resident during the Enhanced Pre-internship Block is adequate.	1	1	21	40	18	3.9
4. Overall, I feel satisfied with the Enhanced Pre-internship Block.	0	6	23	38	14	3.74

Conclusion

More than 80% of the medical students agreed and strongly agreed that the program has been helpful. Such view is confirmed by another round of survey 5-month into the internship where a substantial proportion of interns felt the program has been useful in preparing them to be more competent interns.

The program could help facilitate the transition of a medical student to a practicing doctor by shadowing the daily clinical activities of an intern in a real clinical environment. The program may enhance their competencies and their confidence to work as interns. Therefore, the program could have significant impact on promoting patient safety, enhancing competencies of medical students and help relieve the anxiety during the transition.