Pilot Project to Assess and Improve Neurosurgery Resident and Staff Perception of Feedback to Residents for Self-Improvement Goal Formation

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Introduction

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) has pushed for more frequent and comprehensive feedback for residents during their training but there is scant evidence for how neurosurgery residents view the current feedback system as used to provide self-improvement information and goal formation. We set forth to assess neurosurgery resident and staff perceptions of the current resident feedback system in providing Specific, Meaningful, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) goals. We then wished to create a pilot project to improve the most unfavorably viewed aspect of the feedback system.

Methods

We conducted an anonymous survey of neurosurgery residents and staff at an academic medical institution to assess SMART goals for resident feedback and used the results to create a pilot intervention to address the least favorably viewed part. We conducted a post-intervention survey to see if perceptions had improved for the targeted intervention.

The survey was created to assess views of resident feedback using a modified Likert scale according to a set of modified SMART goals (specific, meaningful, achievable, realistic, timely) formation by asking the following questions:

- Feedback to residents provides residents specific items for improvement (Specific)
- Feedback to residents provides residents meaningful items for improvement (Meaningful)
- Feedback to residents provides residents achievable items for improvement (Achievable)
- Feedback to residents provides residents realistic items for improvement (Realistic)
- Feedback to residents occurs in a timely fashion (Timely)
- Feedback to residents helps the resident

Table 1 – Pre-Intervention Survey Responses to Questions

	Specific	Meaningful	Achievable	Realistic	Timely	Improve
Negative	3	3	2	2	8	2
Non-negative	10	10	11	11	5	11

Table 2 – Post-Intervention Survey Responses to Questions

	Specific	Meaningful	Achievable	Realistic	Timely	Improve
Negative	1	1	1	1	0	0
Non-negative	6	6	6	6	7	7

Results

Neurosurgery residents and staff completed an anonymous online survey indicating timeliness of feedback was the most significant concern for feedback for neurosurgery residents. A simple anonymous feedback form was created and distributed monthly to neurosurgery residents, staff and nurses with the results reported monthly to each resident for six months. In the post-intervention survey neurosurgery residents and staff had changed from a negative to non-negative opinion on the timeliness of resident feedback (p=0.01).

Table 3 – Comparison of Pre-Intervention to Post-Intervention Changes in Negative Perception

	Specific	Meaningful	Achievable	Realistic	Timely	Improve
Pre-intervention negative response rate	23%	23%	15%	15%	65%	15%
Post-intervention negative response rate	14%	14%	14%	14%	0%	0%
P-value	0.41	0.41	0.48	0.48	0.01	0.41

Conclusions

The required ACGME feedback methods may not be providing adequate feedback for goal formation for self-improvement for neurosurgery residents. Simple interventions, such as anonymous feedback questionnaires, can improve neurosurgery resident and staff perception of feedback to residents for self-improvement and goal formation.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, participants should be able to: 1) identify possible methods to assess resident satisfaction with feedback, 2) recognize shortcomings in the ACGME required feedback mechanism.

References

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