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Abstract

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Advancing Oncology Education: Implementing a novel “Frontiers in Neoplasia” curriculum to engage fourth-year medical students in evidence-based, multidisciplinary cancer care

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Abstract

Background: Few medical students are exposed to evidence-based, multidisciplinary oncology care, and few studies in oncology education reflect consolidated preclinical curricula. Fourth-year medical students were introduced to a four-week curriculum, “Frontiers in Neoplasia”, which included didactic lectures, interactive site visits, and team-based simulations of tumor boards and clinical trial design.

Methods: To analyze the course’s impact, students’ pre- and post-course responses to Likert-scale clinical evidence questions were analyzed using Wilcoxon rank-sum tests. Students’ general course feedback was analyzed using thematic coding analysis.

Results: Of the 107 enrolled fourth-year medical students between 2021-2024, 94 completed the pre-survey and 96 completed the post-survey. Quantitative analysis showed a significant increase in students’ comfort in evidence-based medicine in oncology ($p < .001$). Students enjoyed the multidisciplinary curriculum, diverse hybrid-format learning modalities, and applicability of coursework to their careers.

Conclusion: Our novel oncology curriculum significantly increased students’ confidence in navigating emerging approaches to cancer care.