A novel approach to teaching surgical skills to medical students using an ex vivo animal training model.

Abstract:

Traditional surgical teaching is influenced by restrictive factors, such as financial pressures and ethical constraints. The teaching of surgical skills during a medical school education seems not to be robust enough at present, possibly resulting in stressful circumstance for surgical novices. However, the authors are convinced that practical training is fundamental for preparing medical students optimally for challenges in the operating theater and have, therefore, examined a novel method of teaching basic surgical skills to medical students. A total of 20 medical students received surgical skill training, which included theoretical lessons, working with ex vivo pig training models, and active participation in the operating theater. All the trainees took written tests and were rated in an Objective Structured Clinical Examination. Before and after training, the students completed a self-assessment form involving the choice of the correct surgical indication and the performance of surgical procedures. The students' performance in the written examination and in the Objective Structured Clinical Examination increased significantly after training \( (p \leq 0.001) \). Furthermore, the evaluation of the self-assessment form revealed significant improvements in all categories \( (p \leq 0.001) \). Our surgical training method appears to improve
the surgical abilities of medical students and to increase their self-confidence with respect to surgical
procedures. Therefore, the authors recommend the integration of this method into the medical school
curriculum to prepare medical students well for surgical challenges.

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