

Clinician Perspectives on Eye-Related Content in Medical Curricula

Michael Bertram¹, Polly Husmann¹

¹Indiana University School of Medicine

Background and Hypothesis: Though medical students are presented with an incredible amount of information, it is impossible to cover everything from every specialty in medical school. The primary goal of this study was to determine the state and breadth of ophthalmology-related content in medical school and what practicing providers believe can be done to improve it.

Project Methods: This study was completed by interviewing six providers (two ophthalmologists, three optometrists, and one ENT physician) with a semi-structured set of questions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted.

Results: The thematic analysis revealed several themes. The primary themes were what the providers believe the schools are currently teaching, how they can improve, and they should be teaching each medical student. The main things the providers think are being taught are the top emergencies associated with the eye and how the eye is impacted by other systems at a very surface level. Ways the providers suggested medical schools can improve were to increase class time talking about the eyes and its pathologies, requiring a short rotation through ophthalmology, and enforcing more dedicated skills training for the ophthalmic exam. The primary findings for what the providers think every medical student should be taught are the various forms of glaucoma and their treatments, steroid eye drops, and diabetic retinopathy.

Limitations and Future Directions: The main limitation for this study is the small sample size and all the providers being from a similar geographic location. Another limitation was the providers' exposure and experience with medical school curriculum providing response variability. In the future, more providers will be interviewed, and the interview responses will be compared to the Indiana University School of Medicine curriculum to determine the extent that IU covers what the providers believe to be important.