

Needs Assessment Survey for Point-of-Care Ultrasound in Family Medicine Residency Training

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Background and significance with relevance to FM: Point-of-care ultrasound (PoCUS) is growing in popularity amongst Family Medicine (FM) physicians. A recent survey of FM residency directors showed that only 2.2% have established PoCUS curriculum, but 40% are starting or are planning on starting a curriculum in bedside ultrasound.

Problem statement: Is there a need for PoCUS curriculum in family medicine residency?

Methods: A needs assessment survey was distributed to attendings and residents at Summa Barberton Family Practice as well as 2017 Family Medicine Education Consortium attendees who participated in an ultrasound workshop. Scores were calculated, and general statistical analysis was applied.

Outcomes: Out of 68 surveys distributed, 50 were completed, 30 by residents and 20 by attendings. Forty-five percent of participants had received some informal training in diagnostic ultrasound but only 6% of residents received formal training in diagnostic ultrasound compared to 30% of attendings. Mean scores on attitudes towards PoCUS were on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) were similar between both groups. Respondents agreed that PoCUS is an important adjunct to the physical exam (attendings 4.05 [0.60], residents 4.30 [0.72]), improves patient safety and outcomes, 3.95 [0.76], 4.35 [0.68] respectively, and should be integrated into FM residency curriculum, 4.30 [0.57], 4.59 [0.69] respectively. Fifty percent of staff and 46% of residents thought that PoCUS would be the standard of care in 20 years.

Conclusion: Participants shared similar feelings regarding the utilization of bedside ultrasound in patient care. Only a small number of attendings and even fewer residents received formal training in bedside ultrasound and neither group felt comfortable with its use for diagnostic purposes. Almost all participants felt that PoCUS should be introduced into FM curriculum.