SELF-CONFIDENCE IN MUSCULOSKELETAL PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND THE IMPACT OF THE RHEUMATOLOGY SEMIOLOGY MODULE ON MEDICAL STUDENTS' FORMATION

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BACKGROUND

Rheumatology is a complex medical specialty that requires clinical reasoning and a detailed physical examination from the student. Diseases of the locomotor system represent the main cause of direct consultation with general practitioners, in addition to leading the causes of chronic pain and physical disability. However, there is a discrepancy between the time spent teaching the musculoskeletal system during graduation and the time dedicated to the care of these patients in primary care. The aim of the present study was to evaluate the self-confidence of medical students on musculoskeletal physical examination and the impact of the Rheumatology Semiology Module on undergraduate education.

METHODS

This is a cross-sectional observational study, with descriptive and comparative analysis of data. One hundred and thirty medical students from a private institution of higher education in Curitiba, Paraná state, Brazil participated in this research, being 62 students from the 4th and 68 from the 6th period. The students answered a questionnaire based on the Likert scales to assess their perception of the Rheumatology Semiology Module and their self-confidence in musculoskeletal physical examination.

RESULTS

A total of 61% of the students stated that the time dedicated to the teaching of musculoskeletal physical examination was insufficient for their education; 83% said they were confident to assist patients with musculoskeletal complaints. In the interpretation of physical examination and diagnosis, the level of confidence was lower in both groups, with no statistical difference. Sixth-period students considered it important to have the theory and practice of rheumatology simultaneously and most of them understood that the use of active methodologies lead to better learning of the musculoskeletal physical exam.

CONCLUSION

We concluded that it is necessary to increase the time directed to the teaching of musculoskeletal physical examination and we considered essential that this content is approached interactively, at different moments of the graduation, in order to provide a sustained learning about those frequent complaints in daily medical life.

KEYWORDS

Medical education, Rheumatology, Musculoskeletal system, Physical examination.