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Are Today's Medical School Graduates Performing the Same Number of Medical Procedures Compared to Graduates Ten Years Ago? A case for Simulation?

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Are Today's Medical School Graduates Performing the Same Number of Medical Procedures Compared to Graduates Ten Years Ago? A case for Simulation?, Nancy S Searle, EdD. BCM, Houston, TX, 77030. Michael Coburn, MD. BCM, Houston, TX, 77030. Kimberly Eastepp, PA. BCM, Houston, TX, 77030.

INTRODUCTION: Medical schools are charged with providing both a strong basic science and clinical curriculum for their students. In most institutions instruction in performing the core clinical procedures is part of the curriculum, but because of many constraints do medical students practice these procedures as many times as medical students in the past? Several studies have concluded that medical students today feel incompetent to perform basic clinical procedures at the time of graduation.

OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study was to determine if the number of procedures medical students perform was significantly different from medical graduates of the same school approximately 10 years ago.

METHODOLOGY: This study surveyed 164 current fourth-year medical students and 171 graduates (1993-1995 of Baylor College of Medicine) who had chosen either internal medicine, pediatrics, general surgery, or family practice as his or her initial specialty. A cover letter was sent either by mail or e-mail, which provided a link to the online survey produced by Zoomerang software.

RESULTS: Twenty-seven graduates and 58 fourth-year students completed the survey. Graduates remembered performing and observing clinical skills statistically more often in the majority of procedures listed in the survey. Venipuncture, IV access, laceration repair, and arterial puncture were the top 4 procedures which graduates felt students needed to have competency prior to internships. Fourth-year students were satisfied overall with the experience they obtained learning clinical procedures.

CONCLUSION: This study validated previous studies in that current medical students are not performing clinical skills as frequently as past graduates. More research to determine if this affects a medical student's confidence and career as a successful resident and physician should be conducted.