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Topic Area: What works? Ideas in residency teaching and assessment

Title: Are learning portfolios useful in assessing paediatric competencies? A resident perspective.

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Abstract:

The evolving role of a physician has moved beyond just being a 'medical expert' to more definitively encompass that of a communicator, collaborator, manager, health advocate, scholar, and professional. The assessment of knowledge as a 'medical expert' is generally straight forward; assessing proficiency at the other expected Royal College competencies is more challenging. One method being used is the learning portfolio.

The resident learning portfolio is becoming more popular, serving as a tracking and assessment tool for medical competencies and is gaining momentum across medical training institutions worldwide. However, there are few reports on resident perceptions of this process, and almost none specific to paediatric residents. Paediatrics at McMaster implemented the use of resident learning portfolios in 2008, with the purpose of guiding a resident's progress through reflective learning and by providing the resident a means in which to record their evaluations, learning contracts, activities and accomplishments all categorized by the seven CanMEDS roles, thereby helping to demonstrate the competencies achieved. The portfolio is reviewed biannually with the program director.

In an effort to ascertain the usefulness of the learning portfolio, a satisfaction survey is being conducted in hopes of determining resident perception of and attitude towards learning portfolios four years post implementation. Based on the strengths and weaknesses identified, it is also anticipated that we will be able to streamline and improve the process of creating and efficiently maintaining a portfolio for paediatric residents throughout an already busy residency, while enhancing assessment of the seven CanMeds competencies.