

Competency-based medical education: theory to practice

Issues about competency-based medical education (CBME) have generated increasing attention and debate among health professions educators for years. This is evidenced by sessions at major international conferences innovative pilot projects, and a growing number of key publications in medical education journals.

Although competency-based medical education (CBME) has attracted renewed interest in recent years among educators and policy-makers in the health care professions, there is little agreement on many aspects of this paradigm. To examine conceptual issues and current debates in CBME is necessary.

It is important to clarify the evolution of CBME from the outcomes movement in the 20th century to a renewed approach that, focused on accountability and curricular outcomes and organized around competencies, promotes greater learner-centeredness and de-emphasizes time-based curricular design. CBME therefore has significant implications for the planning of medical curricula and will have an important impact in reshaping the enterprise of medical education. Invite medical educators everywhere to enter into further dialogue on CBME approach and its potential perils is imperative to make complete competency-based medical curricula for the 21st century.