

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES AND SELF-ESTEEM

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BACKGROUND

The development of professional skills and attributes allows students to build self-esteem, identify with others and view themselves within a profession (Hunter et al., 2007). However, this can be challenging for those within generalist degrees with a diversity of graduate destinations, such as biomedical science (Panaretos et al., 2019). When students in specialised degrees learn skills and attributes that aren't applicable to their desired career, a disconnect occurs, which impacts professional identity development (Noble et al., 2014). This study examined the relationships between skills, attributes and self-esteem among biomedical science students and how this impacts on professional identity.

METHODS

Second year biomedical science students (n=582) were asked to describe their desired profession, skills and attributes they possessed and needed to develop, and their self-esteem. Consenting students' responses were subjected to inductive thematic analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Students described a variety of desired professions, with medicine being the most common. Students also described many skills and attributes that were needed for those professions. There was a correlation between awareness of skills and attributes and self-esteem, reflecting students' developing strong professional identity. This suggests students with greater awareness are more likely to be confident in their chosen career.

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