
DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE STUDENTS

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BACKGROUND

For students in science, professional identity develops as they pursue a 'major' within their degrees (Nadelson et al., 2017). However, unlike many disciplines, students majoring in biomedical sciences often do not intend on remaining within these disciplines, instead they are pursuing a career in medicine or health (Panaretos et al., 2019). A biomedical science degree may provide a good knowledge basis for these careers, but can it support the development of these students' professional identities?

METHODS

Students in biomedical science (n=191) identified the career they intended to pursue and described their perceptions of how their degree could contribute to their future professionalism.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Most students intended to pursue medicine (70%) or health (6%). Only 12% intended a career in biomedical science, while some (7%) were unsure of their future. Students frequently identified communication, critical thinking and information literacy skills as valuable, and that qualities such as the ability to work with others, ethics and independence contributed to their developing professionalism. However, some students (6%) were unsure if, or how, their degree could contribute to their desired career. These findings highlight that most students see value in their biomedical science degrees, but that alignment of skills and qualities to future professions could be improved.

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