

Why do medics from different backgrounds perform better or worse than others?

November 23 2015

A report commissioned by the General Medical Council and carried out by the Collaboration for the Advancement of Medical Education and Research (CAMERA) at Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry (PUPSMD) has reviewed the issues around why medics from one demographic group may perform differently from those from another on the same assessment.

The rapid review analysed 39 [academic papers](#) and 29 other sources of information. Its findings suggest that there is no single reason for varying levels of attainment between different ethnic groups. Research indicates that the explanation is likely to involve multiple factors, including language and social networks on an individual level, and the role of educational environments and culture in organisations.

The review was led by Dr. Sam Regan de Bere, Deputy Director of CAMERA at PUPSMD. She said: "This issue is important to the medical profession - we need to understand what it is that allows one [demographic group](#) to perform better or worse than another in the same training. While the reasons for difference are complex and varied, we identify that medical educators are well-placed to develop and evaluate appropriate support structures across the continuum of professional training; from A -levels to undergraduate curricula, and through postgraduate study to continuing professional development in the workplace."

She added: "As we seek to widen access to the [medical profession](#) for

candidates across the broadest social spectrum, it is more important now than ever before that we address the issue of 'differential attainment' so that the playing field is as level as we can make it."

The General Medical Council commissioned the research as part of a broader programme of work to better understand the nature of differential attainment and the actions it might be able to take to help mitigate this. The review has helped those at the General Medical Council to understand what the existing literature could tell it regarding causes, effective interventions and promising ways of researching the issue.

Provided by University of Plymouth

Citation: Why do medics from different backgrounds perform better or worse than others? (2015, November 23) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-medics-backgrounds-worse.html>

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