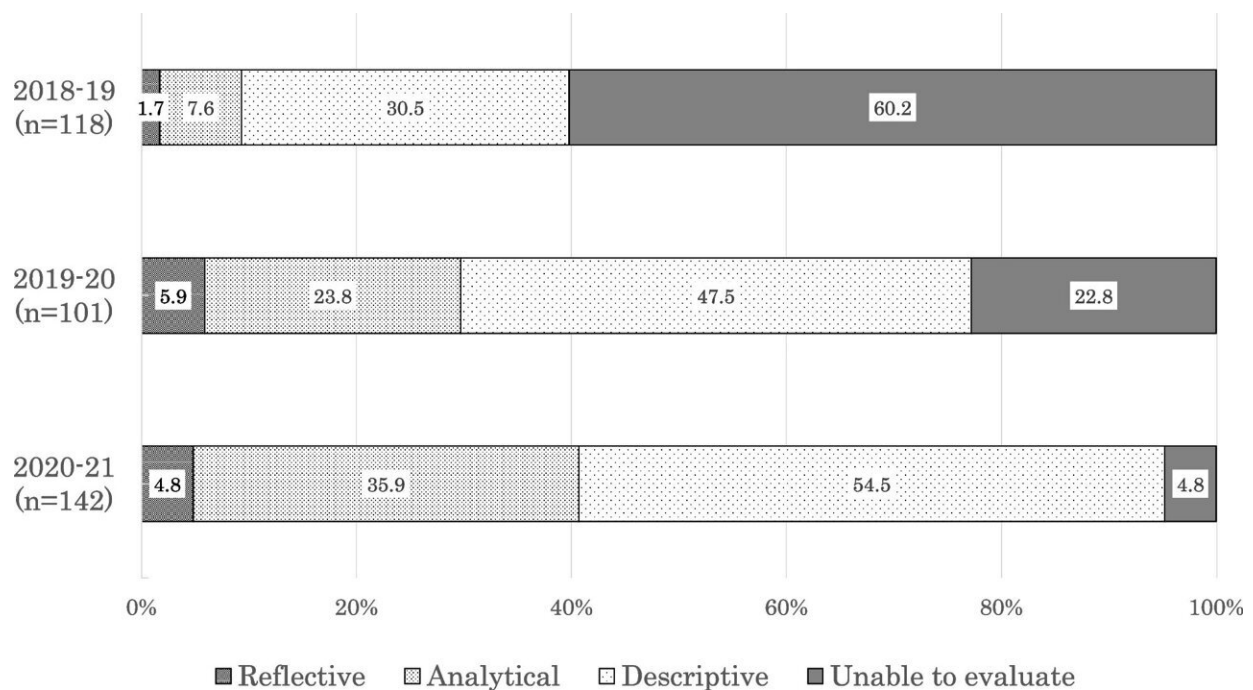


Educational program helps medical students better understand the relationship between health and society

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Levels of reflection in student reports from the SDH program provided in 2018–19, 2019–20, and 2020–21. 2018–19 refers to the program from October 2018 to May 2019, 2019–20 refers to the program from October 2019 to March 2020, and 2020–21 refers to the program from October 2020 to June 2021. SDH: social determinant of health. Credit: *BMC Medical Education* (2023). DOI: 10.1186/s12909-023-04320-2

The intricate relationship between human health and various social and economic factors has gained significant attention in medical education. These social factors, known as social determinants of health (SDH), play a crucial role in shaping health outcomes. However, there is a limited number of studies that continuously evaluate the effectiveness of educational initiatives in enhancing medical students' understanding of SDH.

In 2018, the University of Tsukuba School of Medicine introduced an SDH education program for [medical students](#) during their clinical clerkship in community medicine. This program is mandatory for 5th and 6th year students and spans four weeks of clinical clerkship training at both the university hospital and suburban hospitals and clinics.

At the beginning of the clerkship, students attend a lecture on SDH. Throughout the four-week training, they are tasked with identifying a case related to SDH, which they present on the final day of training. Additionally, they are required to submit a report upon completion of the training. The program has undergone periodic revisions to enhance its content, and faculty development initiatives have been implemented to deepen the understanding of SDH education.

This study evaluates the level of understanding of SDH among students by analyzing three years of student reports, from 2018 onwards. The results indicated a progressive increase in the percentage of students with a deeper comprehension of SDH since the inception of the program. Furthermore, students displayed the ability to focus on different aspects of SDH in their reports.

The future is expected to witness increased attention toward SDH education programs for medical students. To further enhance these programs, it is crucial to foster greater integration between medical and social science education.

The work is published in the journal *BMC Medical Education*.

More information: Sachiko Ozone et al, Three-year evaluation of a program teaching social determinants of health in community-based medical education: a general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis, *BMC Medical Education* (2023). [DOI: 10.1186/s12909-023-04320-2](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-023-04320-2)

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