Wild Trials 2023:
A Case for Pre-Hospital Teaching in UK Medical Schools

Hetty Breed[1], Elin Davies[1], Michael Woodward[1]

[1]Medical Student at the University of Manchester

Introduction

Pre-Hospital Emergency Medicine (PHEM) refers to the care of patients before they reach hospital, in remote urban or rural areas.[1]
PHEM as a specialty is a relatively new speciality recognised as a subspeciality by the General Medical Council 2012[2].
Wilderness Medicine Societies (WMS) are student-run organisations that offer opportunities for learning relating to pre-hospital medicine. They host teaching sessions, simulation days and large scale events, allowing medical students to meet and share their passion for practicing medicine in unique environments.
This study aims to evaluate medical student perceptions of current pre-hospital teaching in the UK medical school curriculum and how WMS are contributing to awareness, enthusiasm and knowledge of PHEM. As well as evaluating the success of Wild Trials 2023, an event which sought to improve exposure to pre-hospital medicine for UK medical students.

The Event

In April 2023, Manchester Wilderness Medicine Society, hosted a national competition, Wild Trials, inviting medical students from across the country to compete in simulated scenarios.
80 students competed in teams of 4 representing 11 universities around the UK.

Teams undertook 10 simulated scenarios, each starting with a standardised briefing. Teams then had 25 minutes to assess, treat, arrange extraction and handover patients before partaking in a debrief with examiners. The weekend also consisted of talks from an expedition doctor, team orienteering and a mass casualty scenario.

Methods

A post-event feedback form was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data about experiences and exposure to PHEM during medical school. They were also asked about the contributions made by their WMS. Students were informed that their responses would be used for the purposes of this project. A total of 40 responses were collected.



Figure 1: Photograph showing a university team attending to a simulated PHEM scenario. The team were required to recognise the diagnosis, and offer treatment.



Figure 2:
A photograph showing a team at a station which involved team members taking it in turns to attend to a simulated casualty. This was to ensure all team members actively took part in both the assessment and handover of the patient to their team.

Results

Pre-Hospital Experience in Medical School

- ➔ 65% (26/40) of respondents stated they were considering a career in pre-hospital medicine, 10% (4/40) said 'no' and 25% (10/40) said 'maybe'.
- ➔ 82.1%(32/39) of respondents stated they have had no exposure to pre-hospital medicine during their degree (excluding student-led events and initiatives).
- ➔ 71.4% (25/35) stated they have had 0 hours of experience relating to pre-hospital medicine during their degree programme so far.
- ➔ 87.5% (35/40) of students stated there were not enough opportunities to explore this speciality in medical school.
  - ◆ If answered no participants were asked experiences that they would have benefited from:
    - 8 people suggested they would like to spend placement hours with PHEM doctors, ambulance crew and paramedics
    - 5 people suggested official training and modules from the university during their degree course
    - 4 people suggested the use of more pre-hospital simulation in medical school

Student Wilderness Medicine Societies

- ➔ 100% (40/40) of respondents stated their wilderness medicine society had provided learning opportunities for pre-hospital medicine.
- ➔ 100% (40/40) of respondents agreed that Wild Trials improved their knowledge of pre-hospital medicine.

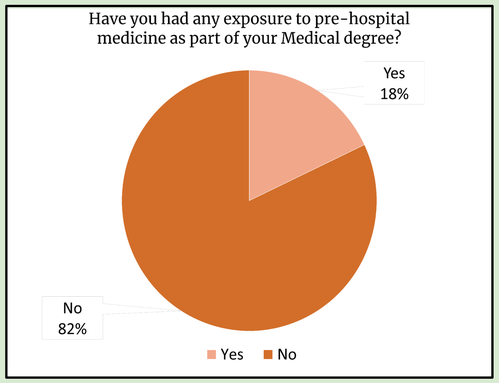


Figure 3:
A graph demonstrating the percentage of respondents who have had exposure to PHEM during their medical degree. 82.1% (32/39) stated they have had no exposure to PHEM. The remaining 18% stated they have had some exposure to PHEM.

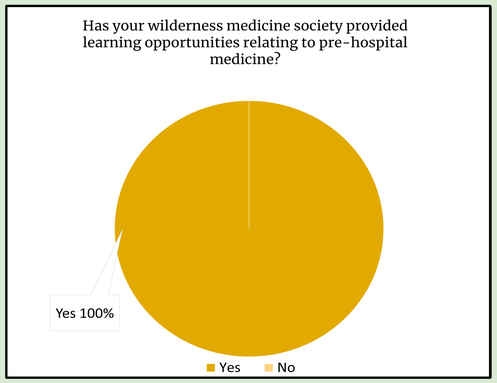


Figure 4:
A graph showing the contributions made by wilderness medicine societies to provide learning opportunities relating to PHEM. 100% (40/40) of respondents stated their wilderness medicine society had provided learning opportunities for PHEM.

Conclusion

- Students who are considering careers in pre-hospital medicine do not get enough chance to explore the speciality during medical school.
- Attendees of Wild Trials 2023 agree that there should be more exposure to pre-hospital medicine during medical school.
- Student-led events and societies are currently providing learning opportunities for medical students, one example being Wild Trials 2023.
- Wild Trials was a successful event that improved participants knowledge of pre-hospital medicine.
- Medical Schools should look to provide further learning opportunities related to pre-hospital care embedded within the curriculum.

Future Directions

It would be useful to gather opinions from the wider student cohort as those responding to the survey were students opting to attend extracurricular activities focused on pre-hospital care.
Moving forward it would be beneficial to work with educators to establish to feasibility of pre-hospital placements and teaching in medical schools across the country.

References

1. Gotz V N. A career in pre-hospital emergency medicine. BMJ. [Internet] 2013 [Cited 2023 June 1]; 346:f2094. Available from: DOI: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.f2094 2. General Medical Council. Sub-specialty Training in Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine.Curriculum and Assessment System. Second edition. [Internet]. 2014 [Cited 2023 June 1]. Available from: https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Sub_specialty_Training_in_PHEM_Curriculum_and_Assessment_System___Second_Edition.pdf_62078132.pdf