University of Exeter

Enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) themes in the BMBS curriculum

Background

In 2023 an Education Incubator project explored the representation of six EDI themes in the year 1 and 2 BMBS curriculum: Race and ethnicity, Religion/beliefs, Disability, Gender identity, Sexual orientation and Socioeconomic status. One aim of this was to identify ways to further embed the themes into the teaching content, the result of which is this resource which has been based on the suggestions by a group of ten year 3 and 4 medical students who reviewed the current year 1 and 2 BMBS written teaching material (lectures, LSRC, PBL and clinical skills) as part of the project. Please use the information in this document to consider how you can make any teaching material/session as inclusive as possible. Table 1 provides general guidance related to different teaching formats and table 2 identifies ways in which each theme could be incorporated into a session - further guidance for many of the suggestions in table 2 can be found by clicking on the title in the table. Not all the suggestions will be relevant to your teaching although, to help enhance the inclusivity of our BMBS curriculum, please try and use as many of them as possible.

Table 1: Guidance on incorporating EDI into different session formats

Type of session	General guidance
Problem Based Learning (PBL)	PBL cases should include a holistic approach to a patient experience, including the impact and challenges associated with any demographic characteristics.
Life Sciences Resource Centre (LSRC)	If including any clinical cases within the session, use a diverse range of patients. Where relevant, identify any intersectionality between the LSRC topic and EDI themes.
Lectures	Use a wide variety of images in lecture slides/other visual material to capture diversity. Where relevant, emphasise the impact of any EDI characteristics on the topic of the lecture.
Clinical Skills	In communication skills sessions include clinical cases with a variety of demographic characteristics and where relevant, specific communication skills e.g. techniques to use when communicating with a patient who has learning difficulties. Identify any adaptations that may be required in clinical examinations to suit patients with diverse needs.

Table 2: Guidance on incorporating EDI themes into a session

All themes	Race and ethnicity	Religion/beliefs	Disability	Gender identity	Sexual orientation	Socioeconomic status
Use inclusive language	Provide information on the prevalence of medical conditions among people from different ethnicities	Identify the impact religion/beliefs may have on lifestyle factors which in turn can result in differences in prevalence for some conditions	Where relevant, identify how a disability will impact on presentation/ management options and treatment outcomes for a condition	Identify the challenges and stereotypes faced by transgender people regarding access to healthcare, diagnosis and/or management and ways to address this	Acknowledge differing sexual behaviours and risks in non-heterosexual people, while avoiding the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes	Identify the impact of lower socio-economic status on the prevalence of diseases
Include a diverse range of images in teaching material	Identify how the presentation, management and/or treatment outcomes of a condition can differ between ethnicities	Identify the impact of religion/beliefs on a patient's presentation, health behaviour, treatment options and/or outcomes	Indicate the challenges experienced by patients with a disability during their healthcare journey and how to address this	Represent trans or intersex anatomy in cases where it may vary from cisgender people	Identify the challenges faced by non-heterosexual people in accessing healthcare and how to address this	Indicate the impact socioeconomic status may have on the presentation, health behaviour, treatment options and/or outcomes and how to address this
Indicate any historical and/or colonial legacy that has led to discriminatory practice (see UoE decolonisation toolkit, Key dates for LQBTQ+ equality)	Where possible, incorporate global perspectives or experiences on medical conditions and their treatments	Where possible, explore how the healthcare system can fulfil the religious requirements of patients during their healthcare journey including the end of life				
Include a diverse range of cases and consider intersectionality						

Resources

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is an important component of inclusivity. In addition to using inclusive language in written and spoken material it is also beneficial for students to be explicitly made aware of the role of inclusive language when speaking to others and to have opportunities to practise using the correct terminology in relevant communication sessions such as those in clinical skills. There are numerous guides regarding inclusive language, below are some which may be of use.

Khuri et al, 2024 An inclusive practice glossary with contributions from the UoE for use when designing workshops that aim to incorporate EDI

Marjadi et al, 2023 A useful article providing information related to inclusive language as well as other ways in which healthcare settings can enhance inclusivity

NICE style guide A more general style guide although at the start of the document it refers to inclusive language

UoE LGBTQ+ inclusion guidance

Diverse Images

Showing images of individuals from different ethnicities, cultures, disabilities etc can help to demonstrate our diversity. In addition displaying images from different ethnicities (e.g the **Mind the Gap** and **Skin for all** resources) can teach students to diagnose signs and symptoms in all skin tones.

Diverse Cases

When using clinical cases to discuss conditions, practise communication and/or examinations it is important to provide a diverse range of individuals and to write the cases so that they allow students to consider and, if time, explore the possible impact a patients' characteristics could have on their healthcare experiences. Such discussions can also help students appreciate intersectionality (i.e. the concept that collective social identities can intersect to shape a patient's health experiences). However, when creating cases, it is important to avoid stereotyping different groups (e.g. not all patients with HIV are from the LGBTQIA+ community) - ensuring a patient's characteristic(s) are not always relevant to the condition helps prevent students automatically attributing a characteristic with a particular condition which in turn can lead to harmful stereotypes.

Epidemiological differences

The epidemiology of numerous conditions varies in accordance with characteristics such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status. To allow students to use this information when determining an individual's risk of a particular condition it is beneficial to indicate epidemiological differences where relevant and the proposed reasons. For example, some differences in risk will be the result of physiological determinants of disease (e.g. sickle cell disease and the increased prevalence in individuals of African descent) whereas others may be related to lifestyle/behaviours that arise as a result of a characteristic (e.g. lower socioeconomic status is associated with nutritional deficiencies which in turn increases the risk of various conditions). In sessions which enable more of a discussion element it is useful to explore what, if anything, could be done to address any increased risk of disease occurrence. It is also important to annually review any statistics to ensure that up-to-date epidemiological information is provided.

Challenges faced by individuals in the healthcare environment

Research has identified the challenges that are faced by people from different groups in the healthcare domain in terms of access, diagnosis and/or treatment. Examples include the experience of stigma and discrimination of transgender individuals in the healthcare setting, poorer experiences of maternity care in the ethnic minority community and difficulties with healthcare access for individuals with a disability. If there is scope to do so, it is useful to highlight these issues ideally in a discussion-based format so that an understanding can be reached as to the challenges that are present and how they can be addressed e.g. the use of inclusive language, respecting individual differences, the provision of aids to increase accessibility for individuals with a disability.

Impact of characteristics on a patients' healthcare experiences

Where possible, it is important to indicate how an individual's characteristics can influence how they experience a condition as well as their engagement with the healthcare services and views on treatment. It is also important to identify ways in which healthcare professionals can create a more inclusive environment.