Introduction

This work was developed from a Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Scotland Enhancement Themes Project on Research Teaching Linkages: Enhancing graduate attributes in the disciplines of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. One of the outcomes of the project was a list of 7 graduate attributes which were generic to both professional and research careers.

This study investigated medical student perceptions of whether the completion of a 3 year Honours BSc in Medicine instilled in them the 7 desirable attributes.

Methods

The latest cohort of graduates at St Andrews University Bute Medical School were surveyed in terms of their opinions upon how well prepared they felt for clinical training and to what degree they felt they had acquired scientific and research skills.

The seven attributes identified from the original project are:
- Enquiring mind/curiosity
- Core knowledge
- Critical appraisal
- An understanding of the evidence base for practice
- Ability to work in a team
- An understanding of ethics & governance
- Ability to communicate

The sample number was 131. All members of the year group completed the questionnaire.

Results

Students felt well prepared for their clinical training and had their interest in Medicine stimulated by undertaking a BSc honours (Results 1).

The vast majority of students of students felt that these attributes had been developed during their studies (Results 2).

Conclusion

This study concurs with the main findings of the original report that if medical curricula include a focus on the development of these 7 attributes then this is equally important to both professional and research careers. The original study it was felt that enlisting current students to consider incorporating research into their career plans was vital to the future development of the professions.

So the challenge is:

To think about novel ways to embed the opportunities to develop these attributes within any curriculum. This is done within our course by all students completing an independent research project as part of their Honours degree.

Questions to audience

- Do you agree with the attributes listed, if not how might they differ in your discipline?
- How do you develop such attributes in your programme?
- How would your students rate their competence against these attributes?