How to get there from... where?
Using evaluation as a GPS for your residency training program

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Introduction

Comprehensive program evaluation should be built into residency programs to iteratively and systematically collect valid and useful data. Many residency training programs use data that is limited in terms of quality and stakeholder inclusivity when carrying out evaluation activities. This data should be comprehensive and inclusive, and of the highest possible quality, as it should inform future policies, practices, and changes in the program. Internal evaluation strategies should also align well with internal and external accreditation requirements as well as the program's mission.

Methods

We developed an evaluation strategy primarily focused on a residency program's structure and stakeholders. Using McMaster University's core Internal Medicine Program as a prototype, through an iterative deliberation process, we mapped the program's components, processes, and stakeholders to measurable outcomes and all relevant stakeholder groups. We also linked all current Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) accreditation standards to our evaluation map.

Results

We created a grid for evaluation operationalization (GEO) to map evaluation processes to a residency program. This framework allows for a detailed and clear alignment between relevant components of the program, processes involved in each component, and measurable outcomes for every process. It also includes stakeholder groups relevant to the outcomes measured and is linked to include all current RCPSC accreditation standards. We set out to develop an online evaluation tool to assist other programs in building their own GEO, as well as host any reports obtained during the evaluation, and provide aggregate evaluation reports based on a program's needs.

Conclusion

We developed an evaluation tool for residency programs that will provide a user-friendly customized evaluation map in the form of a GEO that will facilitate collecting, organizing, and reporting information.