

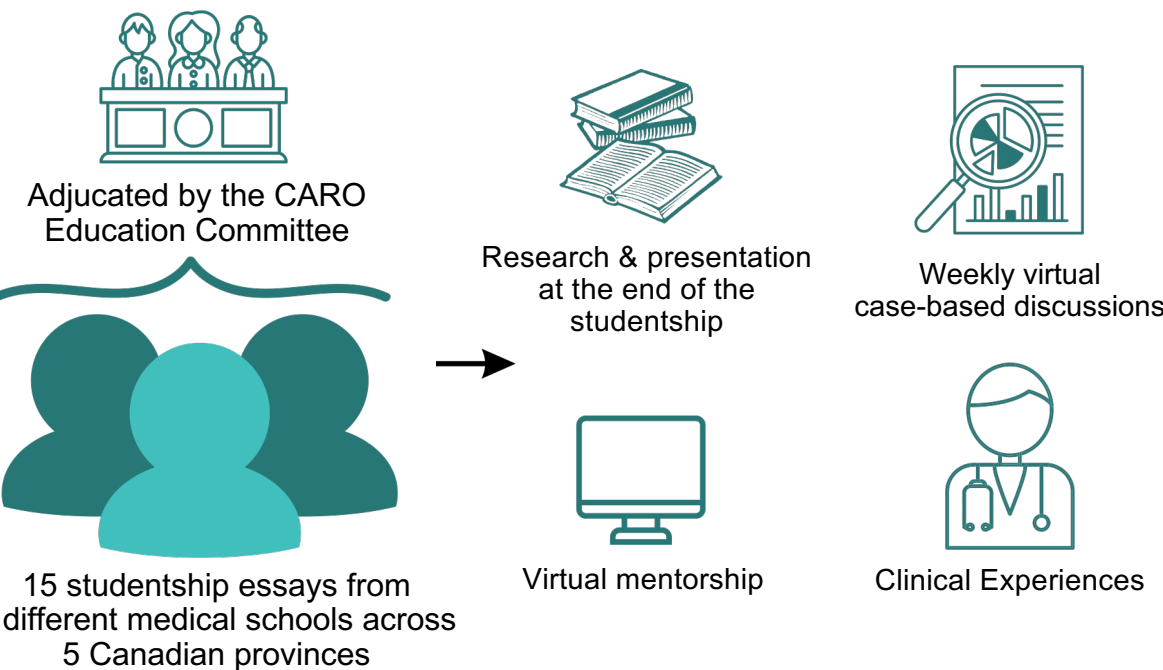
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INTRODUCTION

Recent workforce projections predict a **shortage** of Canadian Medical Graduate-trained **radiation oncologists**^{1,2}. Exposure to radiation oncology (RO) in medical school curricula is **limited**, and thus mentorship and research opportunities like the **CARO-CROF Dr. Pamela Catton Summer Studentship** attempt to bridge this gap and stimulate ‘interest in the specialty^{3,4}. In 2021, the studentship was redesigned as **virtual research, mentorship** and **case-based discussions** due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study explores the impact of **COVID-19** on the studentship, the **students’ perceptions** of the program, and its impact on students’ medical training and **career choice**.

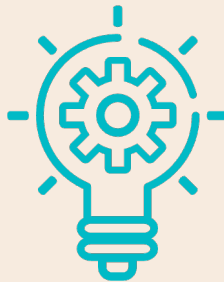
METHODS



- **Thematic analysis** was performed using Nvivo^{5,6} to interpret the essays
- Themes were established by **identifying connections** between coded excerpts
- **Consensus** was achieved through multiple **rounds of discussion** and **iterative review** of each theme and sub-theme
- **Representative quotes** were used to illustrate the themes and sub-themes

RESULTS

Perceived Benefits



Knowledge

Through clinical experiences and foundational knowledge of RO via case-based discussions



Connections

Through longitudinal 1:1 mentorship with a radiation oncologist and RO residents



Skills

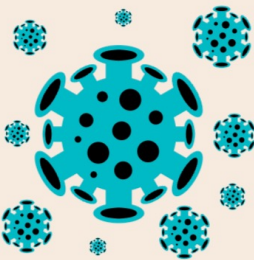
Students honed their clinical skills (e.g., history taking, physical exams, communication) and scholarly skills (e.g., critical appraisal of literature)



Attitudes

Created positive attitudes towards learning in RO and allowed students to gain an appreciation for the humanistic side of RO

Studentship Experiences



COVID-19

Posed barriers on travel and in-person experiences; however, students were able to participate in virtual mentorship, case-based discussions and research activities to gain exposure to RO

DISCUSSION

Effects of COVID-19

- The shift to virtual research and case-based discussions was **well-received**.
- It delivered **additional breadth** to the studentship with **associated benefits**

We recommend the studentship maintain a virtual component to continue offering these valuable experiences

Impact on CanMEDS Roles



Communicator

Learning how to conduct difficult conversations using a patient-centred approach



Health Advocate

Appreciating the humanistic side of medicine and learning patient factors beyond the clinical setting



Professional

Teaching students about the high behavioural standards as a radiation oncologist



Leader

Adopting responsibility by spearheading their research projects



Scholar

Gaining foundational knowledge in RO via teaching sessions and dissemination of research



Collaborator

Collaborating with a radiation oncologist to complete a research project

Impact on Specialty Selection

Table 1: Conceptual integration of the CARO-CROF Dr. Pamela Catton Summer Studentship and Bland-Meurer Model of Medical Specialty Choice

Bland-Meurer Model	Studentship Role in Medical Specialty Choice	
Medical School Characteristics*	Seven medical schools representing 5 Canadian provinces	
Student Characteristics*	Nine and 6 students participated in the 2021 and 2022 studentships respectively-	
Student Values	Students developed positive attitudes towards working with cancer patients and appreciated the humanistic aspect of RO	
Perception of Specialty Characteristics	Extracurricular experiences and mentorship provided by the studentship taught students about RO characteristics	
Career (Personal) Needs to Satisfy	Students reconciled the following attributes of RO with their career (personal) needs:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salary• Status• Work-life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working Hours• Intellectual satisfaction• Location/ Career options

*Medical school and student characteristics are inherent factors of the students selected for the studentship.