Does a baseline SP interview prior to the start of the medical communication curriculum, along with facilitated reflection with mentors, may focus and motivate student learning, create a nidus for their interpersonal and communication skills development, and potentiate student attention to the medical interviewing curriculum?

Statement of Problem or Question

• Medical interviewing, reflection and self-assessment skills are essential for future physicians
• Students bring to medical school ideas, habits, and values about their interpersonal and communication skills
• Students’ self-assessment is variably accurate and insightful
• In quarter 1 of Practice of Medicine (POM), MS1 develop reflection, interpersonal and communication skills through a curriculum using simulated medical encounters with Standardized Patients (SP)

Does MS1 self-assessments of their developing communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes both before and after their first year medical communications curriculum set coming into medical school. We did not stratify our data by prior experience

Description of Program

Objective: We implemented a comprehensive program in communication skills development, evaluation, self-assessment, and feedback for students to improve skills in interviewing, reflection, and self-directed learning

• In 2009, we aimed to measure medical students’ (n=63) self-assessments of their developing communication skills, knowledge, and attitudes both before and after their first year medical communications curriculum
• To assess learners’ insights, we used the Patient-Physician Interaction (PPI) instrument, administered at three points during the quarter
• Students rated confidence and competence in patient communication, and SPs evaluated students using the PPI checklist
• Educators for CARE (E4C) consists of 15 faculty mentors in multiple disciplines committed to developing medical students as skilled and compassionate physicians
• Faculty mentors in E4C are responsible for 5-6 students longitudinally
• Mentors facilitated mid-quarter reflection with students to develop learning goals

Timeline

QUARTER ONE:
Communication / Medical Interview

Baseline SP Encounter (Sept 2009)
Mentor reflection & goal setting (Oct 2009)
End Quarter SP Assessment (Dec 2009)

Findings to Date: Student Self-Assessment

Communication Confidence and Competence

• Decreases in mean confidence and self-reported competence in communication skills between pre-baseline and post-baseline ratings
• Retrospective posttest and post-final ratings show significant (p<0.00) increases in self-reported confidence and competence

Thematic Analysis of Student Comments

• Students value the baseline exercise “This experience was valuable to show how much I don’t know.”
• Students’ lack of medical knowledge inhibits them
• Students value process and flow
• Students struggle with understanding their professional identity
• It was tough to assume a new role when I don’t know how to play it well.”

Patient-Physician Interaction Categories

• Significant increases (p<0.00) by end quarter in mean self-reports of performance in all 9 PPI categories
• Professional competence
• Opening the encounter
• Gathering information
• Active listening
• Established rapport
• Exploring the patient’s perspective
• Patients feelings
• Addressing the patient’s needs
• Closing effectively

Questions for Future Research

• Do MS1 self-assessments of PPI correlate with SP ratings?
• How do student and SP ratings compare with those of physician preceptors who observed the final exercise?
• Do MS1 perceptions of strengths and areas for improvement correlate with performance ratings?
• Can student reflection be enhanced through review of their video encounters?
• Observing development of knowledge and skills through medical school, are early insights addressed over time?

References

3. Fadlon J, Pessach I, Toker A. Teaching medical students what they think they don’t know how to play it well.”