

A study on evaluation of awareness of social responsibility among medical students

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Abstract

Background: A doctor should be able to establish and maintain professional boundaries and must be accountable. Medical students should have commitment to the growth of the medical profession. Professionalism is now a required competency across the continuum of undergraduate.

Objective: To study the level of awareness of social responsibility among fresh medical students and indirectly motivate them toward socially oriented profession by self-assessment.

Materials and Methods: Single group, cross-sectional observation study was done in a medical college in South India after approval by the institutional ethics committee. A total of 248 pre- and paraclinical level medical students enrolled and 237 participated in this study. A descriptive questionnaire addressing the communication attitude, student's view on drug abuse, competence to face real-life situations, attitude to social responsibility, and research was issued to them. The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS 17 summary statistics software.

Result: Among the participants, 69.6% of students had desirable communication attitude, 11.8% had experienced intravenous drug abuse, 75.9% were confident to face real-life situations, 62% showed desirable social attitudes and responsibility, 38.4% expressed self-centeredness, 70.9% were interested in research, and 84.8% expected guidance from teacher. Questions that were not answered were taken as invalid response.

Conclusion: Communication attitude needs improvement by training. Current student behavior needs better relationship between students, parents, and teachers. Facing real-life situations is expected to improve in forthcoming years of study. A minor group of students needs to learn and apply desirable social behavior. Student's role in research can be nurtured by teachers' motivation and guidance.

KEY WORDS: Communication attitude, drug abuse, social attitude, medical students


Introduction

In today's health-care model that is leaning toward more streamlined and corporate industrialism, our responsibility as doctors is to ensure the integrity of medical profession. As the

professional values are getting deteriorated, the development of the younger generation is adversely affected.

A medical professional should have knowledge of social, ethical, and humanitarian principles that influence health care. The medical students should be trained to communicate with patients, families, and community effectively. A doctor should be able to establish and maintain professional boundaries and must be accountable. Medical students should have commitment to the growth of the medical profession. Professionalism is now a required competency across the continuum of undergraduate.^[2]

Hence, this study aims to assess the awareness of the social behavior of medical students with respect to empathy, responsibility, and professional manners. Social orientation is

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less as medicine is increasingly tuned to a competence in system and evidence-based practice with reduced humaneness of medical practice and loss of our pledged obligation to society, but excessive emotion can also result in the loss of objectivity. An important component in the development of medical student's proficiency is self-assessment.

This study aims to give a chance for self-assessment and kindle social thoughts in students. Medical student's professional development is an essential aim of the medical schools.^[3] Peer-based learning aims to develop skills such as tolerance and listening before acting, which is important in a medical student. The study plan is to analyze social behavior of medical students under the headings of involvement in communication, students view on drug abuse, attitude and competence in facing real-life situations, and social responsibility.

Objective

To evaluate the awareness of social responsibility among pre- and paraclinical medical students and to assess their level of social responsibility and stimulate thoughts toward socially oriented profession.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

Single group, cross-sectional observation study.

Study Population

Pre- and paraclinical medical students.

Study was conducted in a medical college in South India after the clearance by institutional ethics committee. Those willing to answer the questionnaire were included. The nature of study and the identity concealment were explained, and informed consent was obtained from each student.

Inclusion Criteria

Pre- and paraclinical medical students who were willing to participate and answer the given questionnaire individually were included.

Statistical Analysis

The data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software, version 17.

Result

Of the 248 enrolled, 237 participated of which 106 were girls and 131 were boys. Questions that were not answered were taken as invalid response. Analyses of each item of the answers obtained were done separately. Results of this analysis show the follow findings.

Only 36.7% students had communicated regarding safe drug use in pregnancy to the people known to them but 70.5% had insisted against the use of over-the-counter drugs to them [Table 1].

Communication of health information to the public in the vicinity of a medical student is a desirable attitude for a future doctor's role in the society. A total of 30% lacked this attitude to pass their knowledge to the benefit of people around them [Table 2].

Student's View on Drug Abuse

Table 3 shows the student's observation of people and events happening in their environment. In this study, awareness of co-students' behavior in drug abuse was assessed. A total of 11.8% of students had encountered intravenous (IV) drug abuse among medical students. Regarding the need for intervention by parents, teachers, or others to revert this behavior, 44.3% of invalid responses showed that the students were not sure of the need for intervention whereas 39.7% approved the need for intervention [Table 3].

Competence and Attitude in Facing Real-Life Situations

A total of 52.3% students have had exposure to persons who were seriously ill in reality and 60.3% were confident in facing such persons individually [Table 4].

About 75% said that they were not trained and 87.8% opined that such training will be useful for them, and 75.9% knew that parenteral therapy can be lifesaving. Awareness of health care setup results is equivocal as 48.9% gave invalid response [Table 5].

Table 6 is the analysis of competence in real-life situations as a whole, and it shows that 75.9% students were found to have expected desirable attitude [Table 6].

Social Responsibility

A total of 77.2% of medical students applied professional manners to patients and 61.6% were not aware of their accountability, 80.2% wished to spare their professional time for the cause of the poor, 74.7% were empathetic, 56.1% preferred to be self-centered, and 67.5% prepared to be responsible toward their family [Table 7].

Table 8 shows that 88.6% accepted humanity as a part of their medical profession.

Table 9 shows research orientation in students and it was found to be present in 70.9% of students. About 84.8% among them expected guidance for their dreams on invention. Maintenance of professionalism toward colleagues was seen in 84.4% of students.

Table 10 shows the following as desirable social attitudes: realization, practice of professional manners with patients and colleagues, knowledge of accountability toward society and family responsibility, and empathy and realization that humaneness is a part of medical profession. A total of 62% of students had desirable social attitudes.

Discussion

Communication Skills

Health education is an important component of health-care personnel competence as quoted by the Accreditation

Table 1: Communicating to illiterate people known to students

Regarding safe use of drugs in pregnancy	Frequency	Percent (%)
Invalid	4	1.7
Communicated	87	36.7
Not done	146	61.6
Regarding OTC drugs		
Invalid	9	3.8
Insisted	167	70.5
Not insisted	61	25.7
Total	237	100

OTC, over the counter.

Table 2: Overall desirable communication attitude in students

Overall communication attitudes in students	Frequency	Percent (%)
Desirable	165	70
Not desirable	72	30
Total	237	100

Table 3: Awareness of co-student behavior and the need for intervention in drug abuse

Drug abuse in medical students	Frequency	Percent (%)
Invalid	6	2.5
Encountered	28	11.8
Not seen	203	85.7
Total	237	100
Knowledge on need to intervene drug abuser		
Invalid	105	44.3
Attention needed	94	39.7
Not needed	38	16
Total	237	100

Table 4: Attitude in facing real-life situations

Faced seriously ill patient	Frequency	Percent (%)
Invalid	2	0.8
Yes	124	52.3
No	111	46.8
Attitude in facing a seriously ill patient		
Invalid	34	14.3
Fear	60	25.3
Confident	143	60.3

Council for Graduate Medical Education, which developed a model using six interrelated domains of competence, which includes communication and interpersonal skills.^[4] Communication of the knowledge gained to the illiterate acquaintances is considered a desirable attitude. A total of 70% of students fit in this desirable category whereas 30% needed further emphasis in this competence.

View on Drug Abuse

From the results, it can be inferred that there is application of knowledge in drug abuse. The frequency of IV drug abuse among medical students is an important feedback of the student's interest in the happenings around as a responsible citizen. Also it gives information of the existing adverse behavior of the student and the need to check and intervene

Table 5: Training in parenteral drug therapy and usefulness

Injection OP postings	Frequency	Percent (%)
Invalid	2	0.8
Have	57	24.1
Do not have	178	75.1
Injection OP postings usefulness		
Invalid	15	6.3
Useful	208	87.8
Not useful	14	5.9
Awareness of status of health-care system		
Invalid	116	48.9
Present	102	43
Absent	19	8
Knowledge of lifesaving parenteral treatment		
Invalid	6	2.5
Present	180	75.9
Not present	51	21.5

OP - Outpatient.

Table 6: Overall desirable competence in real-life situations

Competencies in real-life situations	Frequency	Percent (%)
Desirable	180	75.9
Not desirable	57	24.1

Table 7: Approach in various social perspectives

Variables	Invalid	Desirable	Not desirable
Professional manners to patients	12 (5.1)	183 (77.2)	42 (17.7)
Awareness of accountability	9 (3.8)	82 (34.6)	146 (61.6)
Variables	Invalid	Present	Absent
Sparing time for service to poor	6 (2.50)	190 (80.2)	41 (17)
Empathy to patients	9 (3.8)	177 (74.7)	51 (21.5)
Self-centered attitude	13 (5.5)	91 (38.4)	133 (56.1)
Family responsibility	6 (2.5)	160 (67.5)	71 (30)

Table 8: Influence of humanity on profession

Acceptance of humanity in profession	Frequency	Percent (%)
Invalid	5	2.1
Agree	210	88.6
Disagree	22	9.3

Table 9: Contribution to science and professionalism

Variables	Invalid N (%)	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
Dream of invention	4 (1.7)	168 (70.9)	65 (27.4)
Expect teacher guidance	3 (1.3)	201 (84.8)	33 (13.9)
Scrutinize colleague	7 (3)	30 (12.7)	200 (84.4)

Table 10: Tabulation of overall desirable social attitudes

Attitudes to society	Frequency	Percent (%)
Desirable	147	62.0
Not desirable	90	38.0
Total	237	100.0

at all levels. The students were aware of the serious nature of the use of IV drugs and the need for intervention to revert the drug users back to normal.

Facing Real-Life Situations

Competence is contextual, it reflects the relationship between a person's abilities and the tasks he or she is required to perform in a particular situation in the real world.^[6] The knowledge that learning parenteral treatment is lifesaving in real-life situations, the confident approach in an emergency state rather than being panicky, and the awareness of health-care settings where doctor is the only person to care for a patient are considered desirable attitudes. Student's exposure to patients in clinical postings has got better results as 76% had desirable approach in real-life situations.

Awareness of Social Responsibility

Process of socialization is medicine's hidden curriculum, and medical teaching needs to contain the social world view embedded in the science taught.^[6] Students were found to have desirable attitudes toward social and family responsibility, except a few. Lack of awareness of accountability and self-centered behavior change can be expected in forthcoming years of curriculum. Professionalism is more than learning a new knowledge, but new rules about feelings.^[7] Empathy status is healthy but it should not result in the loss of objective. A well-trained medical student should be competent in ethics of profession as in academics.^[8] The Program for Professional Values and Ethics in Medical Education insists bringing together students and faculty into learning team to discuss issues on service.^[9] Greater percentage of students were ready to serve the cause of the poor, wished to adopt professional boundaries, were interested in research, and expressed expectation of guidance from teachers, which can be positively used by a teacher.

Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that communication skills need emphasis among medical students. Better student, parent, and teacher relationship is mandatory to identify students promptly and intervene at all levels, to revert them back from IV drug abuse. Attitudes in real-life situations are expected

to improve as they grow and as they get exposed further to patient care in the forthcoming years of study and in the internship. Students are inclined to contribute to science, and teachers can cultivate this in them by motivation and guidance. A fragment needs to apply desirable social behavior as they mature as a professional; besides parents, teachers also need to be a role model in being socially responsible and practice professionalism.

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