



Developing Communication Skill - A Requirement For Medical Students

Karnam Vanishya Krishna

DMIMS, Nagpur

Developing Communication Skill - A Requirement for Medical Students

ABSTRACT

Effectual Communication with colleagues, employers and mostly patients is a basic requirement persons in medical field. Learning Communication skills will help medical persons to achieve success when working in a team, gain confidence and also help develop good connection with associated persons. Proper planning and good communication skill is required when working in critical care. Learning and practicing these skills leads to major success in ones career. In medical care there is no room for errors, so proper conversation and communication is a routine. Patient care needs a very effective communication. Well defined and useful communication skills training for healthcare providers is very much required in medical education. Doctors should be able to use all communication mediums like phone conversation, via e-mails, one to one conversation, attend meetings and conferences and also deliver verbal and written information. Doctors have to communicate with patients, their families, referring physicians, office staff and also maybe their heads and team members. So Doctors need to handle differing or challenging perspectives.

Keywords: Effectual communication, communication skill, critical care, challenging perspectives.

INTRODUCTION

Communication skills can be mastered by doing courses, but can be maintained by practice. The right time to learn these at medical college is when doing the clinical clerkships. Short term training programmes help doctors in pursuing different field of interests. Communication skills courses should be a form of case study: given a certain problem, medical students should be able to solve it. Interpersonal skills are important on daily basis more in medical profession where we need to converse with people. Interpersonal skills include communication skills such as listening, speaking, understanding emotions, ones body language etc. Good communication between doctor and patient is vital for all medical consultations. Doctors need to build relationships, show empathy, gather information, explain concepts, and plan treatment with their patients.

Indian Doctors have good subject knowledge are able to identify problems and treat patients well, but they are lacking in communication skills. They need a formal training in these area, so they can easily converse with anxious relatives of ill patients. Doctors many times require to work in teams as they have diverse areas of specializations, so proper communication with colleagues and staff is many times more important in this field. These special skills can be learnt easily by doing training and getting on with fine points to deal with in critical conditions. Apart from that interns should be compassionate and competent. Generally people don't feel it is necessary to train in this field, but these days one need to master it.

Common mistakes while communicating with patients are: not collecting full details of patient, questioning without listening, not able to note all existing symptoms, not getting fully informed, not considering emotions, not taking proper decisions.

The Budding Doctors need to acquire the following skills:

- Person to person dealing skill;
- understanding emotions of others especially patients (empathy);
- relationship building or understanding ones emotions and thoughts(rapport);
- Finding if patient is satisfied, that is feedback.
- Planning and implementing (giving of information).

METHODS

Approaches for good communication

IMPROVE YOUR SPEECH TRANSPARENCY

Words pronunciation and our voice tone plays a great role in conversing with others and helps others also to converse easily.

1. Slow down: Talking slowly in a pleasant tone helps convey message more effectively and also gives good confidence.
2. Keep your language simple: Simple words gives a better understanding of what we want to convey.
3. Check for understanding: Find if the person listening has understood what you wished to communicate.

LISTENING , REPEATING AND REFLECTING

Communication Skills are more diverse than medical students think they are. It is not limited to telephonic conversations or one to one talk but is multidimensional. You need to understand peoples emotions, you need to talk to them understand them related to their case and then come to conclusion.

1. Listening: Communication is not only saying but is also listening. Learning to hear, interpret and conclude to what others wish to say is crucial in communication..

2. Repeating: Saying what you tried to tell in a different way as you understood, helps you to come to a conclusion.

3. Reflecting: Think before you speak. Slow down and ensure, what to say.

TEAMWORK MATTERS

Contributions, Behavior and Responses plays major role if you work in a team. The better your behavior is, the better your team will be working. You can lead or be a member of the team, a good communication and positive approach will help team perform much better.

1. Identify your strengths : Your strengths, skills and capabilities are the assets you bring to your team. Identify them and communicate. Different members may have different strengths, by using them wisely all weaknesses will be covered.

2. Work on your weaknesses: Identifying and understanding your weaknesses, will help you learn skills to develop your weaknesses and contribute well as a team member.

3. Clear and Concise Communication : Communicating effectively is critical for any successful team. If a team work has to be completed, it is must to have clear and defined communication guidelines.

4. Delegate or Share work: Teams should be highly functional; every member should take part equally, based on strengths and weaknesses.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS HELPS TO GAIN SUCCESS

The highly successful people achieve mostly because they develop and maintain positive relationship.

1. Keep a good reputation: kindness, courteousness and being compassionate to patients will help.

2. Long-term association and Life long regular patients.

3. People don't want to take risk especially in medical field as their near and dear ones life is involved. They can cut back associations if something does not work well. So one has to improve ones stability and good relation to keep going.

4. Patient satisfaction: All things cannot be right everytime, but problems that appear have to be resolved. Patients easily forgets past issues if they are treated with respect and listened to.

5. Mouth to mouth Publicity: Patients will highly recommend your services if you establish a positive relationship with them. Communicate in a well mannered way with good etiquettes so you make a strong impression.

6. Friendships: Work relationships can turn into friendships. It is difficult to be alone all the time doing your work. Develop positive relationships with your colleagues and co-workers so that they could become lifelong friends.

7. Self well-being: If you have positive relationships with people around, you can have joy and fulfillment in your work environment.

8. Networking and social media: Strong Work relationships needs to be nurtured. This Positive behavior can spread into an entire community of connected people, where every person maintains a thread of connection between increasing numbers of others.

MAKE YOURSELF LIKED

People tend to form first opinion about others when they meet them first time. So it will be helpful to you professionally if people like you in first place, Follow these Three C's

Credibility: Your credibility is the extent to which others believe what you tell them. If you want to gain respect, create trust, and build a great rapport with people, you must work on your credibility.

Consistency: People will trust you if you act in a consistent manner, and if you treat people in similar manner, you can only expect consistent results from people you communicate with if you are also consistent.

Confidence: If you think and act more confidently and positively, you will be able to communicate more confidently and effectively.

USE EMPATHY

Sympathy is a feeling of care and understanding for suffering beings. Empathy is ones capability to feel the thoughts, emotions of others without wanting to communicate on purpose. Most people find it difficult to express ones real feelings. If we are able to understand other peoples emotions, we will be quite stand out from other people in the same profession. Empathy is to understand other person's position and their feelings. Being able to 'step back' and detach ourselves from our own emotions is essential for effective, constructive relationships

CONCLUSION

Well Defined and Effectual communication skills training programmes should be compulsory for undergraduate and postgraduate trainees and should be a part of faculty and Staff development programmes in medical institutions throughout India. Master the tools and techniques you need to communicate effectively, confidently and professionally in the workplace, whether writing emails, speaking over the phone or meeting or conferences and others on one to one basis.

Training the candidates to apply communication skills will enhance their understanding and its applicability in day-to-day clinical settings. All medical students should receive training in communication skills because if they acquire these, they will be better medicos and their future patients' relations will improve. The training should use experimental methods and primarily address problem-defining skills. Effectual Communication skill is most importance for young doctors, and it is easy to learn using role play. Learn how to express yourself even more concisely, precisely and clearly.

REFERENCES

1. Maguire P, Pitceathly C: Key communication skills and how to acquire them. *BMJ*. 2002, 325: 697-700. 10.1136/bmj.325.7366.697. [Google Scholar]
2. Clever SL, Jin L, Levinson W, Meltzer DO: Does doctor-patient communication affect patient satisfaction with hospital care? Results of an analysis with a novel instrumental variable. *Health Serv Res*. 2008, 43: 1505-1519. 10.1111/j.1475-6773.2008.00849.x [Google Scholar]
3. Parle M, Jones B, Maguire P: Maladaptive coping and affective disorders in cancer patients. *Psychol Med*. 1996, 26: 735-744. 10.1017/S0033291700037752. [Google Scholar]
4. Ramirez AJ, Graham J, Richards MA, Cull A, Gregory WM: Mental health of hospital consultants: the effects of stress and satisfaction of work. *Lancet*. 1995, 347: 724-728. [Google Scholar]
5. Roter DL, Hall JA, Kern DE, Barker LR, Cole KA, Roca RP: Improving physicians' interviewing skills and reducing patients' emotional distress. *Arch Intern Med*. 1995, 155: 1877-1884. 10.1001/archinte.1995.00430170071009[Google Scholar]
6. Bertakis KD, Azari R: Patient-centered care is associated with decreased health care utilization. *J Am Board Fam Med*. 2011, 24: 229-239. 10.3122/jabfm.2011.03.100170. [Google Scholar]
7. Whitehouse CR: The teaching of communication skills in United Kingdom medical schools. *Med Educ*. 1991, 25: 311-318. 10.1111/j.1365-2923.1991.tb00072.x. [Google Scholar]
8. Makoul G: The SEGUE Framework for teaching and assessing communication skills. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2001, 45: 23-34. 10.1016/S0738-3991(01)00136-7. [Google Scholar]
9. Rider EA, Hinrichs MM, Lown BA: A model for communication skills assessment across the undergraduate curriculum. *Med Teach*. 2006, 28: 127-134. 10.1080/01421590600726540. [Google Scholar]
10. Brown J: How clinical communication has become a core part of medical education in the UK. *Med Educ*. 2008, 42: 271-278. 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2007.02955.x.
11. Von Fragstein M, Silverman J, Cushing A, Quilligan S, Salisbury H, Wiskin C: UK consensus statement on the content of communication curricula in undergraduate medical education. *Med Educ*. 2008, 42: 1100-11017. 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2008.03137.x. [Google Scholar]
12. Deveugele M, Derese A, De Maess-chalck S, Willems S, Van Driel M, De Maeseneer J: Teaching communication skills to medical students, a challenge in the curriculum?. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2005, 58: 265-270. [Google Scholar]
13. Van Dalen J, Kerkhofs E, van Knippenberg-Van Den Berg BW, van Den Hout HA, Scherpbier AJ, van der Vleuten CP: Longitudinal and concentrated communication skills programmes: two dutch medical schools compared. *Adv Health Sci Educ*. 2002, 7: 29-40. 10.1023/A:1014576900127. [Google Scholar]
14. Bosse HM, Nickel M, Huwendiek S, Jünger J, Schultz JH, Nikendei C: Peer role-play and standardised patients in communication training: a comparative study on the student perspective on acceptability, realism, and perceived effect. *BMC Med Educ*. 2010, 10: 27-10.1186/1472-6920-10-27. [Google Scholar]
15. Jünger J, Köllner V: Integration von Kommunikations trainings in die klinische Lehre [Integration of a doctor-patient communication training into clinical teaching]. *Psychother Psych Med*. 2003, 53: 47-55. 10.1055/s-2003-36965. [Google Scholar]
16. Jünger J, Schäfer S, Roth C, Schellberg D, Friedman Ben-David M, Christoph N: Effects of basic clinical skills training on objective structured clinical examination performance. *Med Educ*. 2005, 39: 1015-1020. 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2005.02266.x. [Google Scholar]

17. Langewitz WA, Eich P, Kiss A, Wossmer B: Improving communication skills--a randomized controlled behaviorally oriented intervention study for residents in internal medicine. *Psychosom Med.* 1998, 60: 268-276. [Google Scholar]
18. Jungbauer J, Alfermann D, Kamenik C, Brähler E: Vermittlung psychosozialer Kompetenzen mangelhaft [Psychosocial skills training unsatisfactory]. *Psychother Psych Med.* 2003, 2003: 319-321. [Google Scholar]
19. Kiessling C, Dieterich A, Fabry G, Hölzer H, Langewitz W, Mühlinghaus I, Pruskil S, Scheffer S, Schubert S: Communication and social competencies in medical education in German-speaking countries: the basel consensus statement. Results of a Delphi survey. *Patient Educ Couns.* 2010, 81: 259-266. 10.1016/j.pec.2010.01.017. [Google Scholar]
20. Haidet P, Dains JE, Paterniti DA, Hechtel L, Chang T, Tseng E, Rogers JC: Medical student attitudes toward the doctor-patient relationship. *Med Educ.* 2002, 36: 568-574. 10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01233.x. [Google Scholar]
21. Silverman J: Teaching clinical communication: A mainstream activity or just a minority sport?. *Patient Educ Couns.* 2009, 76: 361-367. 10.1016/j.pec.2009.06.011. [Google Scholar]
22. Losh DP, Mauksch LB, Arnold RW, Maresca TM, Storck MG, Maestas RR, Goldstein E: Teaching inpatient communication skills to medical students: an innovative strategy. *Acad Med.* 2005, 80: 118-124. 10.1097/00001888-200502000-00002. [Google Scholar]
23. Wahlqvist M, Mattsson B, Dahlgren G, Hartwig-Ericsson M, Henriques B, Hamark B, Hösterey-Ugander U: Instrumental strategy: a stage in students' consultation skills training?. *Scand J Prim Health Care.* 2005, 23: 164-170. 10.1080/02813430510018646. [Google Scholar]
24. Zick A, Granieri M, Makoul G: First-year medical students' assessment of their own communication skills: a video-based, open-ended approach. *Patient Educ Couns.* 2008, 68: 161-166. [Google Scholar]
25. Harrison A, Glasgow N, Townsend T: Communication skills training early in the medical curriculum: the UAE experience. *Med Teach.* 1996, 18: 35-41. 10.3109/01421599609040260. [Google Scholar]
26. Humphris GM, Kaney S: Assessing the development of communication skills in undergraduate medical students. [see comment]. *Med Educ.* 2001, 35: 225-231. 10.1046/j.1365-2923.2001.00869.x. [Google Scholar]
27. Shapiro SM, Lancee WJ, Richards-Bentley CM: Evaluation of a communication skills program for first-year medical students at the University of Toronto. *BMC Med Educ.* 2009, 9: 11-10.1186/1472-6920-9-11. [Google Scholar]
28. Cegala DJ, Lenzmeier Broz S: Physician communication skills training: a review of theoretical backgrounds, objectives and skills. *Med Educ.* 2002, 36: 1004-1016. 10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01331.x. [Google Scholar]
29. Makoul G: Essential elements of communication in medical encounters: the Kalamazoo consensus statement. *Acad Med.* 2001, 2001: 390-393. [Google Scholar]
30. Anjali Choudhary and Vineeta Gupta: Teaching communications skills to medical students: Introducing the fine art of medical practice. *Int J Appl Basic Med Res.* 2015 Aug; 5(Suppl 1): S41–S44. [Google Scholar]
31. D L Klamen , R G Williams: The effect of medical education on students' patient-satisfaction ratings. *Acad Med.* 1997 Jan;72(1):57-61. [Google Scholar]
32. Akshay Kumar, Navdeep Sokhal, Richa Aggarwal, Keshav Goyal, Kapil Dev Soni, Rakesh Garg, Sanjeev Bhoi, Ashok Deorari, Ajay Sharma: Communication skills training through 'role play' in an acute critical care course, *MEDICAL EDUCATION*, 2021, vol: 34, Issue:2, pg:92-94 [PubMed]
33. Maria C Hausberg, Anika Hergert, Corinna Kröger, Monika Bullinger, Matthias Rose & Sylke Andreas : Enhancing medical students' communication skills: development and evaluation of an undergraduate training program, *BMC Medical Education* volume 12, Article number: 16 (2012) [PubMed]
34. Tom W. Reader, Rhona Flin and Brian H. Cuthbertson: Communication skills and error in the intensive care unit, *LSE research online*, 2007, 13 (6). pp. 732-736.
35. Yasutomo Oda, Hirotaka Onishi, Takanobu Sakemi, Kazuma Fujimoto and Shunzo Koizumi: Improvement in medical students' communication and interpersonal skills as evaluated by patient satisfaction questionnaire after curriculum reform, July 2014, vol. 55, no. 1, 73

36. Kenneth H. Cohn, MD, MBA, FACS: Developing Effective Communication Skills, Volume 3(6); 2007 Nov
37. Gilligan C, Powell M, Lynagh MC, Ward BM, Lonsdale C, Harvey P, James EL, Rich D, Dewi SP, Nepal S, Croft HA, Silverman J: Communication skills interventions for medical students, Cochrane library, Published: 9 February 2021
38. Elizabeth A Rider I, Margaret M Hinrichs, Beth A Lown: A model for communication skills assessment across the undergraduate curriculum, Med Teach 2006 Aug;28(5):e127-34. doi: 10.1080/01421590600726540.
39. [http://www.aachonline.org/dnn/Events/InternationalConference\(ICCH\).aspx](http://www.aachonline.org/dnn/Events/InternationalConference(ICCH).aspx)
40. Comm-skills_MP-module_flyer.pdf (maximumperformance.co.uk)
41. <http://youtu.be/12auGnaKeVk>

