

A RESIDENT AND FACULTY TEACHING SKILLS WORKSHOP USING STANDARDIZED MEDICAL STUDENTS: A FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING IN THE CLERKSHIP

Kumar, B and Weston, W
University of Western Ontario

Abstract:

Objective:

The objective of this workshop was to teach residents and faculty how to reinforce clinical clerks' communication skills which they had learned in first and second year of medical school. This is the first paper describing the use of Standardized Medical Students (SMS) in a post-graduate teaching-skills workshop at a Canadian Medical School.

Description of the Workshop:

Several studies show that communication skills deteriorate in the clinical years of medical school; hence there is a need to continue communication skills training in the clerkship. Because residents are the principal teachers for clerks on ward rotations, this workshop was targeted to them as well as to faculty. The participants were given a lecture style information session on learning in the clerkship and the issues related to teaching communication skills. This was followed by interactive small-group sessions that employed role-play exercises with SMS. Three teaching scenarios were presented: 1. A new clerk joins the service; 2. A clinical clerk rejects an opportunity to counsel a patient on smoking cessation portraying a negative attitude to the patient; 3. A clerk in the emergency department ignores the life situation of a patient with a myocardial infarct that leads to refusal of admission to hospital. All three scenarios were meant to demonstrate the need to integrate communication skills teaching with the existing day-to-day teaching on the wards. Residents and faculty were able to participate by role-playing with the SMS or by providing constructive feedback as observers.

Results:

The workshop was rated highly by all participants, especially the role-play exercises with SMS and appeared to meet the objectives.

Conclusion:

This workshop utilized role-plays with SMS to help improve resident and faculty teaching of communication skills to clinical clerks. SMS may be useful in the development of formal residency training programs. This change comes at a time when residents are being identified as key players in the teaching of clinical clerks.