First Year Students’ Predisposition for Empathy, Cultural Competence, and Perceptions of Using Motivational Interviewing: Implications for Training

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RESULTS

BACKGROUND

Role of Pharmacist Communication Skills

- Effective provider–patient communication impacts patient outcomes
- It is important to train future pharmacists in communication skills and contexts for delivery of advanced care services
- It would be useful to know future pharmacist predispositions and attitudes towards these topics and skills training

Empathy

- Empathy is conceptualized as a communication process and as a professional state
- Empathic responses foster patient engagement in health care decisions
- The validated Kiersma-Chen Empathy Scale (KCES) has been used to measure empathy perceptions in pharmacy and nursing students

Cultural Competence

- Cultural sensitivity is an accreditation requirement in pharmacy education meant to help reduce health disparities
- Cultural sensitivity and effective intercultural communication are important in a culturally diverse healthcare environment

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

- MI is a patient-centered, evidence-based way of being and communication skills set for helping patients change health behavior
- MI skills include expressing empathy, and supporting self-efficacy and patient autonomy, among others
- CAPE Outcomes Guide for Standards names MI as a patient-centered communication skills set available for student pharmacist training

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the predispositions for empathy and cultural sensitivity of first year students (P1s)
- To assess student attitudes towards motivational interviewing communication skills and training
- To evaluate associations at baseline between characteristics and perceptions of P1s to inform training needs and content

METHODS

- Cross-sectional study
- First semester P1s enrolled for the Patient Centered Skills course and MI skills labs (130 of 150 consented)
- Survey questions administered online via Qualtrics
- Student predispositions for empathy and intercultural sensitivity, and attitudes about MI
- IRB approved, expedited review

Measures

- Kiersma-Chen Empathy Scales (KCES): perceptions of empathy; lower scores = higher empathy perceptions
- Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS): cultural sensitivity; higher scores = higher sensitivity
- Perceptions of counselling activities and future MI use: Likert-type from 1-7 (not important-very important); the 5-7 items were collapsed to one to represent those with positive expectation for patient counseling and/or using MI.

Data analysis

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies and means (SD))
- Association between variables was determined using Pearson correlation and/or Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient test
- SPSS v. 20 for Windows, p < 0.05

RESULTS

Table 1. Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean ±SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KCES*</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>33.61 ±7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>32.04 ±7.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36.79 ±8.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>89.63 ±9.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>89.64 ±9.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>89.61 ±9.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compared with Purdue study on Empathy for pharmacy (37.26 ±9.17) and nursing (31.24 ±6.30) students

Table 2. Correlations Among Perceptions of Empathy and Cultural Sensitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation (r)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KCES with Gender</td>
<td>0.290*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS with Race</td>
<td>0.292*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCES with ISS</td>
<td>-0.382*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level

Table 3. Perceptions for Patient Counselling and MI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response 5-7 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important do you feel providing patient counseling on medication adherence is to your role as a pharmacist?</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important do you feel providing patient counseling on additional disease management behaviors is to your role as a pharmacist?</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to use MI in your current professional encounters with patients?</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How likely are you to use MI in your future professional encounters with patients?</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Responses 5-7 collapsed to one for analysis

DISCUSSION

- Student empathy perceptions were similar to (slightly more than) those of pharmacy students elsewhere
- Females reported higher empathy perceptions than males
- Persons of racial diversity reported higher intercultural sensitivity
- Predisposition for empathy was significantly associated with higher Intercultural sensitivity, gender, perceived counseling activities, and future application of MI
- Student perceptions of future counseling activities was high for both medication adherence and disease management
- After exposure to MI principles and skills training, students perceived using MI in future patient encounters more than current

LIMITATIONS

- Self reported data could be influenced by social desirability
- Limited external validity
- Measures for perception of future/current counselling activities have not been validated

CONCLUSIONS

- Predisposition for empathy could be indicative of predisposition towards patient counseling and cultural sensitivity
- Future training for cultural competence could benefit from contexts geared towards enhancing empathy

REFERENCES