Teaching and Assessing Communication Skills in Dentistry

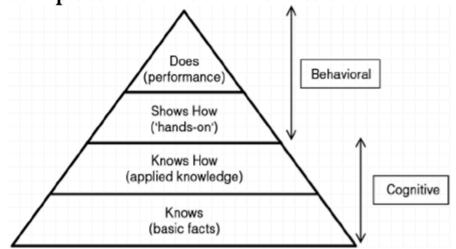
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Introduction

This year communication skills training shifted online to provide dental students with experience in virtual encounters with patients.

Miller's pyramid of competence was used to assess cognitive (lower) and behavioural (higher) levels of competence in communication.



Course Overview

Part 1: Didactic Content (*Knows*) Quiz to assess knowledge

Part 2: Modelling Behaviour (*Knows How*) Video review and analysis of communication skills

Part 3: Experiential Learning (Shows How) Simulated scenarios using Standardized Patients (SP)

Methods and Results: Part 3 Experiential Learning











Student
played
dentist role
with SP in
scenarios
common to
clinical
practice

Raters
assessed
dentist's
strengths
and areas
needing
improvement

Verbal feedback to dentist from SP, peers and facilitator Written
reflection:
What
learned and
why
important

Meeting with case facilitator to debrief



Cases rated as realistic and clinically relevant



High correlation between SP and facilitator

scores



Constructive feedback provided by all raters plus dentist selfassessment:



Text
analysis of
reflections;
coded for
themes



Shared
'take away'
with other
students
who played
same role

Discussion and Conclusions

Reported communication strengths: Demonstrating empathy, building rapport; understanding patient perspective.

Reported areas needing improvement:

Gathering information, use of simple language, picking up on patient cues.

References

Miller GE. 1990. The assessment of clinical skills/competence/ performance. Acad Med 87(7):S63–S67.

Acknowledgements

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