Students' Attitudes to Shared Decision Making

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Background: Shared decision making (SDM) is considered a basic requirement for patient care and the ability for undergraduate pharmacy students to demonstrate competency in this area is a GPhC requirement. This exploratory study looked at two interventions to assess the attitudes of first year pharmacy students to SDM.

Method: The interventions were organised early in semester 1 of year 1 in 2013/2014. The first intervention was to re-design four communication lectures, to focus on patient-centred communication, and the use of videos, from HealthTalkOnline¹. The videos depicted patients discussing their experiences and perspectives of communication with healthcare professionals. The second intervention was a patient-led workshop, focusing on the patients' perspective of managing their health needs. To evaluate the interventions a validated instrument, the updated Leeds Attitude to Concordance Scale (LATConII)², was used, with students answering the questions using TurningPoint®, before the first lecture (T1), after the fourth lecture (T2) and after the workshop (T3).

Results: Of 154 1st year students, 68, 39 and 16 responded at T1, T2 and T3 respectively, answering all of the 20 LATConII questions. A positive shift in attitude was seen between T1 and T2, from 37.5 to 43.4 out of 60, however the small response rate at T3 made detection of a further shift in attitudes meaningless.

Discussion: The shift in attitude at T2 was encouraging, however, the use of the LATConII instrument via TurningPoint® introduced some limitations, as students must answer all of the questions for the results to be valid, the process was time consuming and the reason for non-response to questions was not apparent. Introduction of a neutral answer into the LATConII instrument may increase response rate, but would mean that results could not be compared with other studies.

References

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