Teaching Graduate Students Effective Communication Skills

Laura Padilla, PhD
Joint AAPM/COMP Virtual Meeting, 2020
Reasoning
Patient Communication Training for Medical Physics Graduate Students
Design and Implementation
Social Workers

Radiation Oncologist

Medical Physicist
Effective medical communication

- Setting goals for the encounter and shifting them as necessary during the interaction
- Accurately detecting and responding to patient reactions
- Reflecting on previous experiences with patients to inform future actions

[Hulsman, Patient Ed and Counseling, 2009]
Training for medical physics GRAD STUDENTS

1. Patient testimonials
Training for medical physics GRAD STUDENTS

1. Patient testimonials
2. Lecture
Training for medical physics GRAD STUDENTS

1. Patient testimonials
2. Lecture

Clinical Communication Frameworks

2. Bayer Institute for Health Care Communication E4 Model (Keller et al.)
   - Empathize
   - Engage
   - Educate
   - Enlist

UC San Diego
Training for medical physics GRAD STUDENTS

1. Patient testimonials
2. Lecture
3. Practice
Evaluation

1. Communication skills - Competence
2. Communication skills - Confidence
3. Attitudes
Prep

Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Session 2

Simulated Patient Encounter #2

Reflective Piece
Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Nalie
25.4K subscribers

https://www.youtube.com/user/nalieagustin
Prep

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Weeks: 1 2 3 4 5

Initial Consult  Simulation  Start of Treatment

Simulation → Planning → Treatment

• Goal: Acquire a scan of the patient for treatment planning.
Prep

Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Baseline (Competence)
Baseline (Competence)

Prep
- Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece
- Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1
- Standardized Patient Encounter #1
- Lecture

Session 2
- Simulated Patient Encounter #2
- Reflective Piece

Evaluation (Competence)

VCUHealth
Prep

Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Session 2

Simulated Patient Encounter #2

Reflective Piece

Post-Training Survey (Confidence)
Prep
- Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece
- Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1
- Simulated Patient Encounter #1
- Lecture

Session 2
- Simulated Patient Encounter #2
- Reflective Piece

March 6
Prep

Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Session 2

Simulated Patient Encounter #2

Reflective Piece
Prep

Patient Testimonial Videos + Reflective Piece

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Session 1

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Session 2

Simulated Patient Encounter #2

Reflective Piece

Image by Sara Torda from Pixabay
Prep

Overview of Radiation Oncology Process

Simulated Patient Encounter #1

Lecture

Simulated Patient Encounter #2

Reflective Piece

March 6

Image by Sara Torda from Pixabay
Preliminary Results
Participants:

All volunteered - Independent of any course, not graded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Doc.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre vs Post survey: Confidence/Comfort

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree
5=Strongly Agree

*Statistically Significant (α=0.05)
Patient encounter performance: Competence

**SP Ratings***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Ratings***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistically Significant (α=0.05)
Patient encounter performance: Competence

SP versus Self-Rating Scores significantly different for evaluation encounter

*Statistically Significant (α=0.05)
Next steps on data analysis

- RO/MP attendings to score encounters
- Compare attending, SP, and self-rating scores
- Qualitative analysis of reflective pieces
Future Plans
Effective (Patient) Communication Strategies
Effective (Patient) Communication Strategies

- Shared Decision Making
- Pediatrics
- Cultural Competence
- Difficult Conversations
- Unconscious Bias
- Reflective Practice
- Telemedicine
- ...

VCUHealth
PCT team:

Emma Fields, MD
Whitney Burton-Meleski, LCSW
Caitlin Duffy, MSW
Caroline Athing, MSW
Dana Burns, NP, FNP-BC
Lauretta Cathers, PhD, LMSW
Acknowledgements

Todd Atwood, PhD
Derek Brown, PhD
Titania Juang, PhD
Thanks for watching!