

Medical Ethics Teaching in Preclinical Step and Its Application in Clinical Stages

Abdolreza Sotoodeh Jahromi¹, Mehrnoush Maalhigh², Maryam Mahdiyar²,
Mohammad Amin Ghobadifar², Seddigh Najafipour¹ and Mohammad Reza Farjam^{1*}

- 1- Research center for Social Determinants of Health, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran
- 2- Student Research Committee, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran
- 3- Research center for Social Determinants of Health, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran

Corresponding author: Mohammad Reza Farjam

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Medical ethics education is training the activities for teaching the examination of rolling the morals in the doctor's relationship with colleagues, patients, and society. It is a wide curricular effort for developing physicians' social perspectives, values, and interpersonal skills for practicing of medicine. The aim of this descriptive and analytical study was evaluating the efficacy of medical ethics teaching in preclinical stage for medical students. **Material and method:** calling for study was asking 138 medical student in Jahrom university of medical sciences, 2013. A total of 102 (73.91%) responded to the study and enrolled to this descriptive study. The enrolled students were in different steps of education of clinical stages. The students were questioned and their attitudes on medical professionalisms, medical ethics and their correlation with stage of gender and education were assessed. **Results:** There were significant differences between female viewpoint (in roles of ethic course which is presented in preclinical step in professional attitude improvement) ($P=0.009$) and also a significant difference was seen in the viewpoint score between student stages with intern stage ($P=0.031$). **Discussion:** Medical students in educational student stages (5th year of education) believe ethics course improve medical professionalism. There are not such beliefs for medical student in higher years of their education. Our results suggest that the teaching of professionalism to medical students may not to be adequate.

Keywords: Medical professionalism, medical ethics, medical student.

INTRODUCTION

Medical universities have mission for training physicians who are expert in many medical aspects. One of these aspects is achieving professional behavior, which called medical professionalisms. Professionalism and its assessment across the medical education continuum have become prominent topics in recent years (1, 2, 3). Therefore training in ethics and professionalism is an important component of medical education to prevent and resolve ethical problems (4).

One of the important goals in training the ethics is recognition of conflicts in different aspects of ethics and having logical viewpoint for analyzing and resolving these conflicts (5).

In fact the aim of medical professionalism training is to premier patients' gains and influence attitudes including responsibility, respect, honesty, devotion, and trusteeship (6). Training professional behavior must create physicians who decide independently in all aspects (7). Also medical students may involve with some difficult conditions in future which requires skills set for resolving and analyzing ethical dilemma (5).

Medical ethics which introduce the norms, rules and also discuss medical condition in aspect of ethics is presented to medical students before clinical courses (2, 8).

Although medical students must achieve their professional attitudes during their education based on their confrontation with their masters experiences and patients, it is not obvious that how medical ethics course improve professional behavior in medical students.

The aim of this descriptive and analytical study was evaluating the efficacy of medical ethics education in medical students: professional attitudes improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This descriptive and analytical study was done on 102 medical students (78 female and 34 male) whom were randomly selected in different steps of education (student, extern and intern).

This research work has been approved by ethics committee of Jahrom University of medical sciences. Medical students were questioned about their viewpoints in the roles of ethic course which is presented in preclinical step in professional attitudes improvement and also about their gender. The questionnaire included 12 questions which scaled based on Likert scale.

Data analysis was done by SPSS version 15 software using T-test and ANOVA. P value less than 0.05 were considered as significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Response Rates

A call for study was ask 138 medical students in Jahrom university of medical sciences, 2013. A total of 102 (73.91%) responded enroll the study.

Study results

The enrolled medical students (102) with mean age of 25.68 ± 3.87 years, included 68 (66.67%) female and 34 (33.33%) male students.

The medical students were in 5th year education (student stages) 44 students (43.14%), 6th year education (extern stage) 34 students (33.33%) and 7th year education (intern stage, the graduation year) 25 (23.53%).

The female medical students had significant statistically higher viewpoints score (49.436 ± 9.066) about the positive role of medical ethics teaching in preclinical step on medical professional attitude than the male medical students (44.206 ± 9.521) ($P = 0.009$).

Also medical students in educational student stages (5th years of education) had a greater significant statistically viewpoint score about the positive role of medical ethic teaching in preclinical steps on medical professional attitudes than the male medical students in comparison with medical student educational intern stages (7th year of education) (Mean Difference: 6.692, Standard error: 3.064, $P = 0.031$).

The most of students in extern and intern stages stated that, they have not recalled the rulls and proclamations which have been taught to them in course of medical ethic during preclinical periods.

But there were not seen significant differences in the viewpoint score between educational student stages (5th year of education) with educational extern stage (6th year of education) (Mean Difference: 3.535, Standard Error: 1.837, $P = 0.057$) and also in the viewpoint scores between educational extern stage (6th year of education) with educational intern stage (7th year of education) (Mean Difference: 3.157, Standard Error: 3.096, $P = 0.310$).

Discussion

The result of this study showed that female medical students had a significant greater scores in viewpoint about about the positive role of medical ethics teaching in preclinical step on medical professional attitude than medical male students, which indicating female students believe ethic course has been taught adecuatly during their premedical steps.

Also medical students in educational student stage had a greater score in the viewpoints than students in other educational stages which means medical students in educational student stage believe ethic course improve medical professionalism.

In the other word medical student in educational students stages, willing to learn this aspect of their profession to develop their professional identity as a physician that is essential steps in becoming good doctors, so they have more positive points of view about this course.

As different contents and formats may be needed for preclinical and clinical students and future ethics programs may need to consider the varying ethical values and attitudes of medical students (2, 7).

Although various researchers have suggested that the hidden curriculum within medical educations has a prominent role in stunting the development of professionalisms among future physicians, there has been minimal discussion of how the contents of the hidden curriculum actually function to this end (9).

In other words there are implicit lessons which is parallel to what medical students learn theoretically, which consists of norms, values and prospects (4).

One of the acceptable methods of professional training is to train the students in clinical environment (4). In this method medical students will be involved with real cases and it's a sort of active educations. Most of the obvious teaching of professionalism is taught during the first two years, in a single course.

Also appropriate time for professional training must be considered because preclinical students can't perceive the critical conditions and the efficacy of this kind of training is under question.

According to the statement of students in the extern and intern stages indicating, they have not recalled the proclamations and rulls which have been taught to them in course of medical ethics during preclinical periods, it seems that medical ethics and medical professionalism must be recall or reteach during clinical stages of medical education.

CONCLUSION

Since there is no special course of training medical students in professionalism, some interventions are required in this field for improving this aspect of physicians' professional life. Furthur studies in other universities are recommended for revealing the need of medical professionalism and medical ethics in clinical stages to medical students.

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