

The Effect of Standardized Patient Encounters on Undergraduate Nursing Student Empathy and Self-Efficacy in Therapeutic Communication

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Background

- Communication is vital in the exchange of information related to health promotion and education, prevention of illness, and treatment options (Kourkouta & Papathanasiou, 2014)
- Communication skills are taught in a largely didactic manner but are not refined until students enter the clinical arena (Lin et al., 2013)
- Standardized patient (SP) encounters offer students an opportunity to practice their skills in an environment free of clinical consequence (Lin et al., 2013)
- SP encounters have been shown to increase clinical knowledge and skill, improve diagnostic reasoning, and improve communication and interviewing skills (Lin et al., 2013)

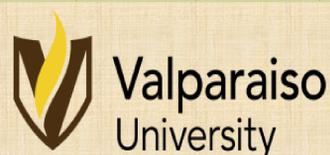
PICOT

- In second-year undergraduate nursing students, how does a SP program compared to traditional educational methods influence empathy and self-efficacy related to therapeutic communication skills within one week?

Review of the Literature

- **Key Terms:** Standardized patient, standardised patient, patient simulation, programmed patient, patient actor, communication, interpersonal, nurse-patient relations
- **Inclusion Criteria:** English language, peer-reviewed or scholarly journals, January 2008-May 2015
- **Exclusion Criteria:** High-fidelity simulation, SP encounters as an assessment tool

Database	Total Results	Duplicate Results	Reviewed Abstracts	Reviewed Studies	Included
National Guidelines Clearinghouse	4	0	4	0	0
Cochrane Library	54	0	54	2	0
Joanna Briggs Institute	7	0	7	1	0
CINAHL	366	0	366	12	10
MEDLINE	401	6	401	10	5
ProQuest	93	12	93	3	0
Total	925	18	925	28	15



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Synthesis of Evidence

- **Levels of Evidence:** Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt's Hierarchy of Evidence
 - **Level I:** Meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) – **1 study**
 - **Level II:** Single RCT – **5 studies**
 - **Level V:** Systematic Review of qualitative studies – **2 studies**
 - **Level VI:** Single qualitative study – **7 studies**
- **Appraisal of Evidence:** JBI-MAStARI, CASP

Decision to Change Practice

- Improvements in communication and interpersonal skills were found to be central findings in the literature (Anderson et al., 2014; Bosse et al., 2012; Crofts et al., 2008; Eid et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2013; Moulton et al., 2009; Oh et al., 2015; Rickles et al., 2009; Schlegel et al., 2012)
- Students found SP encounters useful, realistic, and learning satisfaction was high (Bosse et al., 2012; Eid et al., 2009; Kowitlawakul et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2013; McKenna et al., 2011; Mesquita et al., 2010; Miles et al., 2014; Owen & Ward-Smith, 2014; Rickles et al., 2009)
- Performance feedback by SPs, blinded evaluators, or instructors served as a valuable component of SP education (Anderson et al., 2014; Hill et al., 2010; Lin et al., 2013; Moulton et al., 2009)
- Use of peers as SPs can reduce cost, promote sustainability, and reinforce learned skills (Miles et al., 2014; Owen & Ward-Smith, 2014)

Implementation

- **Theoretical Framework:** Patricia Benner's From Novice to Expert Model
- **EBP Framework:** The ACE Star Model of EBP
- **Sample:** Sophomore Intervention Group ($n = 19$), Sophomore Comparison Group ($n = 23$), Junior Participant Group ($n = 20$)
- **Setting:** Midwestern private university; College of Nursing and Health Professions
- **Design:** Pre-test/post-test; Pilot intervention
- **Intervention:**
 - Sophomore-level students participated in a brief SP encounter aimed at improving empathy and self-efficacy related to therapeutic communication
 - Junior-level students acted as SPs
 - Feedback related to therapeutic communication skills was delivered following encounter
- **Tools:** Empathy and Self-Efficacy in Therapeutic Communication Scale; Learning Satisfaction and Learning Method Evaluation Scale
- **Time:** One week

Evaluation

- **Primary Outcomes**
 - Feelings of empathy and self-efficacy in three samples independently (Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Rank test)
 - Comparison of Sophomore Intervention and Comparison Groups (Mann-Whitney U test)
 - Comparison of Sophomore Intervention and Junior Participant Groups (Mann-Whitney U test)
- **Secondary Outcomes:**
 - Learning satisfaction of all participants

Outcomes

- **Significant ($p < 0.05$) Improvements for Junior Group**

"I feel that I am able to put myself in a patient's shoes while providing care"	$p = 0.020$
"I believe that empathy is an important component of providing quality health care"	$p = 0.025$
Disagreed with the statement "I feel that an emotional connection to my patient may be detrimental to my ability to provide optimal/unbiased care"	$p = 0.046$
"I feel comfortable using silence during a conversation with a patient"	$p = 0.014$
"I feel comfortable summarizing a conversation with a patient prior to closure of the conversation"	$p = 0.011$
"I am aware of my body posture (open stance, uncrossed arms, etc.) during communication with a patient"	$p = 0.021$

- **No significant Improvements for Sophomore Intervention Group**

- **Significant Improvements for Junior Group Compared to Sophomore Intervention Group**

"I feel that I am able to put myself in a patient's shoes while providing care"	$p = 0.042$
"I feel that I am able to understand my patient's non-verbal cues and body language"	$p = 0.004$
"I consider the understanding of non-verbal communication to be an important aspect of patient care"	$p = 0.003$
Disagreed with the statement "I try to remain objective and distance myself from a patient's emotions during patient interactions"	$p = 0.049$
"I feel comfortable using open-ended questions during a conversation with a patient"	$p = 0.042$
"I feel comfortable summarizing a conversation with a patient prior to closure of the conversation"	$p = 0.043$

- **Significant Improvements for Sophomore Intervention Group Compared to Sophomore Comparison Group**

"I feel that lack of empathy would hinder my ability to provide quality care"	$p = 0.015$
Disagreed with the statement "I feel that an emotional connection to my patient may be detrimental to my ability to provide optimal/unbiased care"	$p = 0.018$

- **High learning satisfaction and positive qualitative feedback**

"The learning experience allowed me to analyze my own behavior and actions"
"I am confident that the learning experience has helped me develop the skills necessary to be successful in the clinical setting"

Conclusion and Recommendations

- SP intervention demonstrated a positive impact on feelings of empathy and self-efficacy related to therapeutic communication, particularly for students acting as the SPs
- Feedback provided by SPs was particularly helpful to sophomore-level participants
- Students reported that they enjoyed and valued the experience
- Interaction with a SP offers students the opportunity to actively learn and reinforce therapeutic communication skills
- Improvements in student instructions and logistics are important to achieve optimal effectiveness of the intervention