

Professional Behavior among Dental Students: Role of Self and Peer Assessment in Improving Student Performance

Jacob John¹, Roslan Saub², Shani Ann Mani³, Aeman H.H. Elkezza¹, Vaishali Malhotra¹

¹Department of Restorative Dentistry, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Malaya; drjacob@um.edu.my

²Department of Community Oral Health & Clinical Prevention, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Malaya

³Department of Paediatric Dentistry & Orthodontics, Faculty of Dentistry, University of Malaya

Objective: The aim of the study is to determine if the self- (SAP) and peer-assessment process (PAP), used early in the dental clinical curriculum, can serve as a useful tool to assess and provide feedback regarding professional behavior of dental students.

Background: According to the Evolving Professional Concept in the field of health education, student learning generally is comprised of theoretical knowledge and skills, clinical or practical competence, and professional behavior, which together provide the necessary foundations for developing the students into "Professionals". Self and peer assessment undertaken by students directly in their learning process may promote a sense of ownership, personal responsibility, self-monitoring and self-regulation in lifelong learning, and the active participation of students in the learning environment

Methods: A total of 61 Year 4 students (academic year 2016-2017) are participating in the ongoing survey. Professional behavior is being assessed using a standardized 15-item scale that measures 2 dimensions namely "work habits" and "interpersonal attributes". The participants have been divided into a total of 8 groups. Each group comprises of 5-6 members. Survey is designed to take place in two phases. In phase 1, students will evaluate their own professional behavior and that of the members of their group via the UM e-learning portal, e-SPECTRUM. They will also be assessed by the teacher. As part of the student's own reflection, they will also need to provide narrative comments describing their own as well as their peers' strengths and weaknesses. Following which, all Year 4 students will receive an online feedback of their performance. In phase 2, the evaluation of the professional behavior exercise will be repeated once again.

Results: A total of 61 participants including four lecturers have participated so far in the ongoing survey. Under phase 1 of evaluation of their own professional behavior and that of the members of their group via the UM e-learning portal, e-SPECTRUM, and majority of the Year 4 students have reported that they understand the importance of professionalism and ethical aspects of dental practice. 80% students are reporting poor communication skills, lack of time management and inability to answer questions posed by lecturers as their weaknesses in being professionals. Students have reported positively towards peer's attitudes and

willingness to encourage each other during clinical sessions. A general opinion was noted on the way collective teamwork can positively influence all the group members. Since the survey is still ongoing, the results are preliminary and will need in-depth analysis to reflect on each criterion.

Conclusion: Our efforts are directed at providing evidence on how introduction of this activity can help increase variety and interest, activity and interactivity, identification and bonding, self-confidence, and empathy for others at the undergraduate level. We intend to develop better teamwork skills and promote active rather than passive learning. We hope it will also help improvise verbal communication skills, negotiation skills, and diplomacy.

This project is supported by RU002T-2016 grant under UM-LiTeR Grant of 2016.