

Simulated patient: a holistic approach like a bridge between theory and practice in medical education

Sartori N. (Trento), Valcanover F. (Trento), Colorio P. (Trento)

Aim: Simulated Patient is a methodology used by the GP School of Trento (Italy) since several years with some specific features which want to develop an holistic approach useful to give ability and experience, not only in relationship between patient and doctor, but also to face the complexity, the uncertainty and the turbulence typical of the GP's setting. This aim is searched out also stimulating the awareness of the existence of the protagonist's emotional reactions which often act in the consultation, sometimes with negative relapses also on clinical aspects.

Methods: The training course starts the first year with 2 or 3 preparatory role play sessions, which are followed by 5 sessions yearly, which last each 3 hours for a total of 45 hours. The acted stories come from real cases and face common problems of the daily practice of the General Medicine and sometimes are very complex. During last year the trainees use the Simulated Patient as moment of consulting group for problematic cases which happened really to them during their practice. Results: Although the first difficulties showed by many trainees, with the passing of time the method facilitates significant changes in the consulting practice. With the time the trainees, the teachers and the simulators learn to use this instrument also as method of personal growing. The teachers have an useful feedback in their room's didactic courses.

Conclusion: The complexity of the daily GP's job becomes particularly evident in the training area when the challenge is to train a doctor able to practice an holistic approach to the patient and to do his work without forgetting the importance of the clinic and of the organization. The simulated patient can be an important instrument helpful to join this aim, mainly if it is proposed with a setting not excessively structured and predictable as it is the setting of the GP.