

Patient centered attitudes of Sri Lankan medical graduates assessed by Patient Practitioner Orientation Scale (PPOS)

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Patient centeredness is a trainable attribute for health care professionals that could be influenced positively as well as negatively by the undergraduate curriculum. Patient centeredness denotes compassionate and respectful delivery of care, adopting a parallel position in sharing information and collaborative planning. The value of such an approach with regard to patient satisfaction, cost effectiveness, therapeutic efficacy and doctor satisfaction has been documented.

Assessment of patient centeredness of doctors becomes valuable for research and evaluation of educational interventions. The objective of this study was to determine patient centeredness among graduates of six medical faculties in Sri Lanka, just before they start practicing.

The validated Sinhala version of the patient practitioner orientation scale (PPOS), which is a widely used, validated, 18 itemed, self-reporting instrument that measures the caring and sharing attitudes, was used. The questionnaire was administered to 1200 doctors who had received appointments as interns in June 2013, at a common lecture at the beginning of internship. Participants were given the choice of selecting either the Sinhala or English version of the PPOS. Fifty six percent were females. The average sharing, caring and total PPOS values were 3.00(0.66), 2.4(0.67) and 2.7(0.589). Sharing, caring and total PPOS values for females and males were 2.97(0.65), 2.33(0.63), 2.65(0.55) and 3.05(0.68), 2.49 (0.72) and 2.77(0.61) respectively. Sharing, caring and total PPOS values for the top 1/3 in merit order and the bottom 1/3 in merit order were 3.05 (0.47), 2.26(0.51), 2.65 (0.36) and 2.99(0.77), 2.39(0.76) and 2.69(0.68) respectively. After eliminating 4 faculties with a very small number of respondents sharing, caring and total PPOS values for foreign graduates, medical faculties with highest and lowest PPOS scores were 3.26 (0.75), 2.67(0.46), 2.78 0.56) and 3.09(0.84), 2.48(0.88) 2.78(0.78) and 2.81(0.57), 2.13(0.52) and 2.48(0.57) respectively.

Overall, PPOS values of Sri Lankan medical graduates are lower than that observed in medical graduates in western countries and slightly higher than those graduating from Nepal, Pakistan and India. A Higher PPOS value among foreign graduates is a notable observation even though it is not statistically significant. A Lower PPOS value seen among females is also an unusual finding compared with the international literature which consistently documents higher PPOS values among females.

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