

Medical students' learning of the consultation and the patient-doctor relationship

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av

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Avhandlingen baseras på följande delarbeten:

- I. Wahlqvist M, Skott A, Björkelund C, Dahlgren G, Lonka K, Mattsson B. Impact of medical students' descriptive evaluations on long-term course development. BMC Med Educ 2006;25:6.
- II. Wahlqvist M, Mattsson B, Dahlgren G, Hartwig-Ericsson M, Henriques B, Hamark B, Hösterey- Ugander U. Instrumental strategy: A stage in students' consultation skills training? Observations and reflections on students' communication in general practice consultations. Scand J Prim Health Care 2005;23:164-70.
- III. Svenberg K, Wahlqvist M, Mattsson B. "A memorable consultation". Writing reflective accounts articulates students' learning in general practice. Scand J Prim Health Care, published on-line 19 Feb 2007.
- IV. Wahlqvist M, Gunnarsson RK, Dahlgren G, Nordgren S. Patient-centred attitudes among medical students: Gender and work experience in health care do matter. (Manuscript)

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Background: Research from educational practice from student's perspective is needed to facilitate a better understanding of students' learning of the consultation. The thesis is based on four studies. The overall aims were to study and analyse medical students' learning of the consultation and patient-doctor relationship. Specific aims were to analyse students' descriptive feedback of a Consultation skills course and its development over five years, to explore final-year students' abilities to communicate with patients, to analyse final-year students' written reflective accounts of a consultation, to assess students' patient-centred attitudes at various stages of undergraduate medical education and to explore the association between patient-centred attitudes and gender, age and work experience in health care.

Methods: A qualitative content analysis method was used in studies I-III, covering term 5 and term 10. T5 students' descriptive evaluations and teachers' documentation were analysed. Experienced supervisors assessed T10 students' video consultations with patients and supervisors focus group meetings were analysed. T10 students' written reflective accounts of a consultation were analysed. A cross-sectional study of students' patient-centred attitudes was performed across the curriculum by an internationally validated instrument (PPOS). Students' gender, age and earlier work experience in health care were also collected and analysed statistically.

Results: Learning of the consultation was facilitated when the T5 student was active in practice, by linking explicit learning goals, learning activities and an examination in practice including feedback. Students' descriptions of awareness and confidence corresponded to a strengthened relation with the facilitator and reflection. In exploring T10 students' video consultations, an instrumental strategy was suggested. However, analysis of T10 students' written reflective accounts of a consultation displayed a view of the patient as a person beyond symptoms, an insight into the complexity of medical work and students' search for a professional role. In contrast to previous reports, no decline of students' patient-centred attitudes was found. Female students had higher PPOS scores compared to male students.

Conclusions: Senior students display patient-centeredness in writing but might have difficulties in integrating their know-how with the performance of physician's clinical tasks. Learning the consultation is suggested to benefit from integrating a patient-centred perspective in a student-centred learning relationship through clinical education; and by adopting a process-oriented and experience-based model including feedback and reflection.

Key words: medical students, learning consultation skills, patient-doctor relationship, communication skills, patient-centred attitudes, undergraduate medical education, experience-based learning model, reflection, evaluation

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