The Effect of “Communication Skills Course” Given to Faculty of Medicine on Face Recognition Test

Tıp Fakültesi Öğrencilere Verilen İletişim Becerileri Dersinin Yüz Tanıma Testine Etkisi

Mehmet ÜZEL, Zennure ADIGÜZEL ŞAHİN, Selman DEMİRCİ, Gözde GÜLTEKİN, Özlem Serpil ÇAKMAKKAYA, Fatma Güler KAHRAMAN YILDIRIM

ABSTRACT

Successful physician-patient communication is very important in diagnosis and treatment processes. Understanding the facial reflections of emotions will contribute positively to this communication. To be able to manage doctor-patient communication well and to provide a good health care service, we think that medical faculty students and other health department students should be given communication skills training in their education life. The Facial Emotion Recognition Test was applied to 211 second grade students at Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty before and after communication skills lesson. Before the test, seven different emotional face expressions (happy, surprised, fearful, sad, angry, disgusted and neutral) were introduced and 49 photos with facial expressions from different people were showed to each participant. Participants were asked to recognize facial emotion expressions. Pre-lesson, the highest mean accuracy rate of recognized facial emotion was “happy” while the lowest was “fear”. The participants recognized “sad” and “fearful” emotions more accurately after the lesson. “Sad” and “fearful” emotions give information about some feelings of the patient. And being able to understand these feelings by the physicians make a good background for a good physician-doctor communication. Therefore, it is important to get communication skills training in terms of health care. Taking this education as a student can be quite effective.

Keywords: Communication skills, Medical education, Face recognition, Physician-patient communication

ÖZ

 Başarılı doktor-hasta iletişimi tanı ve tedavide çok önemlidir. Duyguların yüzdeki yansımasının anlaşılması bu iletişime olumlu yönde...
INTRODUCTION

Communicating is a social need of every human being. Good communication is important in getting and / or giving health care as much as it is important in social life. This is why DiMatteo’s good patient-doctor relationship facilitates more effective health care delivery, as emphasized by DiMatteo, "The best tool on the way to treatment is good patient-doctor communication" (Hargie, Dickson, Boohan, & Hughes, 1998). The physician is one of the most educated and interchangeable factors related to communication skills, with numerous factors that can influence patient-doctor communication (Kleinman, 2008). While communication is divided into verbal and nonverbal, face expressions are important in nonverbal communication. Patient’s anatomical structures on the face can give information about the patient’s character (Kosif, 2018). Also, the patient’s facial expressions, states and movements, speech and tonalities can help the doctor in understanding the patient’s complaints. Therefore, doctors should be trained to know the patient’s feelings correctly and learn how to manage the situation in the face of difficult speech. If doctors are already trained to be able to acquire or develop these skills while they are medical faculty students, the yield on health care services will surely be higher.

Medical faculty second grade students are given training in communication skills in practical hands (short sketches, games and theoretical knowledge) in groups of 25 students. In this study, students who received this test were compared with their pre-test and post-test results by applying the test of recognition of their emotions from the face expression. It was researched whether the given communication skills training contributed to the ability to understand the feelings of the person who is important in communication.

METHODS

Participants

The study was conducted with medicine students attended communication skills lesson from Medical Faculty between April - October 2017. The communication skills lessons are taught by instructors who have taken courses in this area. In these lessons, theoretical knowledge about communication skills is explained and the lessons are practiced (short sketches and games) (Sullivan, Maagarick, Berghold, & McIntosh, 1995). All participants were mentally healthy. Three hundred twelve students were asked to participate to the study. Upon giving written informed consent anonymously, all students were performed the test although 101 students were not completed the test procedure so were eliminated. Totally, test group included 211 students. The study was approved by the local ethics committee.

Communication Skills Lesson

The lessons are interactive and taught role plays with using effects of vocal and facial emotions on meaning. Also importance of verbal and non-verbal communication is emphasized. The effects of word tones on the meaning of the word, the different meanings of different face expressions, the different meanings, the importance of nonverbal communication, the exaggeration of personality in communication are taught with the short sketches. These are given from lecturers who were well-trained about these issues.

Procedure

The Facial Emotion Recognition Test was performed two times well before and after the three-hour lesson while without giving any feedback. The test was constructed using a set of photographs from Ekman and Friesen’s book “Pictures of Facial Affect” (Ekman & Friesen, 1976). The test included the photos of four male and four female models (a total of 56 photos) with happy, surprised, fearful, sad, angry, disgusted and neutral facial expressions. All photos were shown to each participant and participants were asked to recognize facial emotion expressions. At first, we had a trial session, which was composed of the first seven photos and included each emotional facial expression that was presented in the same order for each participant. A total of 49 photos were used for the data analyses in the study. All participants were tested individually in a classroom.

Statistical Analyses

The statistical analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 for Windows. Descriptive analyses were presented using mean ± standard deviation for numeric values. The variables were investigated using Kolmogrov-Smirnov to determine whether or not they are normally distributed. Student- t test for normally distributed data and Mann–Whitney U test for non-normally distributed
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PRE-QUESTIONS

As a professional requirement, communication skills training should be taken in the professions where people are frequently contacted.

• Communication skills training will be very useful in order to provide a better health service in a difficult and tiring profession.

• The fact that the first step of this education is given to the doctor candidates who have not yet started their career, raises awareness and we think it will be more beneficial.


